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THE NATIONAL REVIEW.

JANUARY 1856.

ART. I.—EDWARD GIBBON.

The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, by Edward Gibbon, Esq. With Notes by Dean Milman and M. Guizot. Edited, with additional Notes, by William Smith, LL.D. In Eight Volumes. London, 1855. Murray.

"PAPA, I wish I was the Roman Empire;" "Child, don't talk nonsense;" was a dialogue of the early years of this century. This is the fate of Gibbon; no one does or can separate the historian from his subject. If you ask as to the antiquities of Constantinople, you are told those are the times which are "in Gibbon." Mr. Carlyle, who never exaggerates, speaks of Madame de Staël, in youth of course, romping about the knees of the "Decline and Fall." He plainly traced a resemblance himself; for he has narrated the events of his own life, "his progression from London to Buriton and from Buriton to London," in the same majestic periods which record the downfall of states and empires. What the commonplace parent thought absurd, has in simple reality happened. It may be useful to attempt in a few pages to substitute a notion of the man for the indistinct idea of a huge imperial being.

The diligence of their descendant accumulated many particulars of the remote annals of the Gibbon family; but its real founder was the grandfather of the historian, who lived in the times of the "South Sea." He was a capital man of business according to the custom of that age—a dealer in many kinds of merchandise—rivalling probably the "complete tradesman" of Defoe, who was

to understand the price and quality of *all* articles made within the kingdom, and be in consequence a complete master of the inland trade. The peculiar forte, however, of Edward Gibbon, the grandfather, was the article "shares;" his genius, like that of Mr. Hudson, had a natural tendency towards a commerce in the metaphysical and non-existent; and he was fortunate in the age on which his lot was thrown. It afforded many opportunities of gratifying that taste. A great deal has been written and is being written on panics and manias—a great deal more than with the most outstretched intellect we are able to follow or conceive; but one thing seems certain, that at particular times a great many stupid people have a great deal of stupid money. Many saving people have only the faculty of saving; they accumulate ably, and contemplate their accumulations with approbation; but what to do with them they do not know. Aristotle, who was not in trade, had a great idea that money is barren; and barren it certainly is to quiet ladies, rural clergymen, and country misers. Several excellent economists have plans for preventing improvident speculation; one would abolish Peel's act, and substitute one-pound notes; another would retain Peel's act, and make the calling for one-pound notes a capital crime: but the only real way is, not to allow any man to have a hundred pounds who cannot prove to the satisfaction of the Lord Chancellor that he knows what to do with a hundred pounds. The want of this obvious and proper precaution allows the accumulation of wealth in the hands of rectors, sweepers, grandmothers, and other persons who have no knowledge of business, and no idea except that their money now produces nothing, and ought and must be forced immediately to produce something. "I wish," said one of this class, "for the largest immediate income, and I am therefore naturally disposed to purchase an *advowson*." Every now and then, from causes which are not to the present purpose, the money of people of this class—the blind capital (as oculists call it) of the country—happens to be particularly large and craving; it seeks for some one to devour it, and there is "plethora"—it finds some one, and there is "speculation"—it is devoured, and there is "panic." The age of Mr. Gibbon was one of these. The interest of money was very low, perhaps under three per cent. The usual consequence followed; able men started wonderful undertakings; the ablest of all, a company "for carrying on an undertaking of great importance, but no one to know what it was." Mr. Gibbon was not idle. According to the narrative of his grandson, he already filled a considerable position, was worth sixty thousand pounds, and had great influence both in Parliament and in the City. He applied himself to the greatest bubble of all—one so great, that

it is spoken of in many books as the cause and parent of all contemporary bubbles—the great South-Sea Company—the design of which was to reduce the interest on the national debt, which, oddly enough, it in fact effected, and to trade exclusively to the South Sea or Spanish America, where, of course, it never did trade. Mr. Gibbon became a director, sold and bought, traded and prospered; and was considered, no doubt with truth, to have obtained much money. The bubble was essentially a fashionable one. Public intelligence and the quickness of communication did not then as now at once spread pecuniary information and misinformation to secluded districts; but fine ladies, men of fashion—the London world—ever anxious to make as much of its money as it can, and then wholly unwise and not now very wise in discovering how the most *was* to be made of it—“went in” and speculated largely. Of course, all was favourable so long as the shares were rising; the price was at one time very high, and the agitation very general; it was, in a word, the railway mania in the South Sea. All at once the shares “hesitated,” declined, and fell; and there was an outcry against every body concerned in the matter, very like the outcry against the *οἱ περὶ* Hudson in our own time. The results, however, were very different. Whatever may be said, and, judging from late experience, a good deal is likely to be said, as to the advantages of civilisation and education, it seems certain that they tend to diminish a simple-minded energy. The Parliament of 1720 did not, like the Parliament of 1847, allow itself to be bored and incommoded by legal minutiae, neither did they forego the use of plain words. A committee reported the discovery of “a train of the deepest villany and fraud *hell* ever contrived to ruin a nation;” the directors of the company were arrested, and Mr. Gibbon among the rest; he was compelled to give in a list of his effects: the general wish was that a retrospective act should be immediately passed, which would impose on him penalties something like, or even more severe than those now enforced on Paul and Strahan. In the end, however, Mr. Gibbon escaped with a parliamentary conversation upon his affairs. His estate amounted to 140,000*l.*; and as this was a great sum, there was an obvious suspicion that he was a great criminal. The whole scene must have been very curious. “Allowances of twenty pounds or one shilling were facetiously voted. A vague report that a director had formerly been concerned in another project by which some unknown persons had lost their money, was admitted as a proof of his actual guilt. One man was ruined because he had dropped a foolish speech that his horses should feed upon gold; another because he was grown so proud, that one day, at the Treasury, he had refused a civil answer to per-

sons far above him." The vanity of his descendant is evidently a little tried by the peculiar severity with which his grandfather was treated. Out of his hundred and forty thousand pounds it was only proposed that he should retain fifteen; and on an amendment even this was reduced to ten thousand. Yet there is some ground for believing that the acute energy and practised pecuniary power which had been successful in obtaining so large a fortune, were likewise applied with science to the inferior task of retaining some of it. The historian indeed says, "On these ruins," the 10,000*l.* aforesaid, "with skill and credit of which parliament had not been able to deprive him, my grandfather erected the edifice of a new fortune: the labours of sixteen years were amply rewarded; and I have reason to believe that the second structure was not much inferior to the first." But this only shows how far a family feeling may bias a sceptical judgment. The credit of a man in Mr. Gibbon's position could not be very lucrative; and his skill must have been enormous to have obtained so much at the end of life, in such circumstances, in so few years. Had he been an early Christian, the narrative of his descendant would have contained an insidious hint, that "pecuniary property *may* be so secreted as to defy the awkward approaches of political investigation." It was on this property, in whatever way acquired or retained, that the social position of the Gibbons was established; and the remnants of it preserved from death the immortal author of the *Decline and Fall*.

The son of this great speculator, the historian's father, was a man to spend a fortune quietly. He is not related to have indulged in any particular expense, and nothing is more difficult to follow than the pecuniary fortunes of deceased families; but one thing is certain, that the property which descended to the historian — putting out of the question all minor and subsidiary modes of diminution, such as daughters, settlements, legacies, and so forth — was enormously less than 140,000*l.*; and if the statistics above quoted are correct, the second generation of the family must have made itself very happy out of the savings of the past generation, and without caring for the poverty of the next. Nothing that is related, indeed, of the historian's father indicates a strong judgment or an acute discrimination; and there are some scarcely dubious signs of a rather weak character.

Edward Gibbon, the historian, was born on the 27th of April 1737. Of his mother we hear scarcely any thing; and what we do hear is not remarkably favourable. It seems that she was a faint inoffensive woman, of ordinary capacity, who left a very slight trace of her influence on the character of her son; who did little, and died early. The real mother, as he is

careful to explain, of his understanding and education was her sister, and his aunt, *Mrs. Catherine Posten*, according to the speech of that age, a maiden lady of much vigour and capacity, and for whom her pupil really seems to have felt as much affection as was consistent with a rather easy and cool nature. There is a panegyric on her in the *Memoirs*; and in a long letter upon the occasion of her death, he deposes: "To her care I am indebted in earliest infancy for the preservation of my life and health. . . . To her instructions I owe the first rudiments of knowledge, the first exercise of reason, and a taste for books, which is still the pleasure and glory of my life; and though she taught me neither language nor science, she was certainly the most useful preceptress I ever had. As I grew up, an intercourse of thirty years endeared her to me as the faithful friend and the agreeable companion. You have observed with what freedom and confidence we lived," &c. &c. To a less sentimental mind, which takes a more tranquil view of aunts and relatives, it is perhaps satisfactory to find that he could not write to her. "I wish," he continues, "I had as much to applaud and as little to reproach in my conduct to *Mrs. Posten* since I left England; and when I reflect that my letter would have soothed and comforted her decline, I feel" what an ardent nephew would naturally feel at so unprecedented an event. Leaving his maturer years out of the question—a possible rhapsody of affectionate eloquence—she really seems to have been of the greatest use to him in infancy. His health was very imperfect. We hear much of rheumatism, and lameness, and weakness; and he was clearly in general unable to join in work and play with ordinary boys. On this account he was moved from one school to another, never staying any where very long, and owing what knowledge he obtained rather to a strong retentive understanding than to any external stimulants or instruction. At one place he gained an acquaintance with the Latin elements at the price of "many tears and some blood." At last he was consigned to the instruction of an elegant clergyman, the *Rev. Philip Francis*, who had obtained notoriety by a metrical translation of *Horace*, the laxity of which is even yet complained of by construing school-boys, and who, having a truly Horatian taste for combining the pleasures of a town with those of a country life, went to London as often as he could, and translated *invisa negotia* as "boys to beat."

In school-work, therefore, Gibbon had uncommon difficulties and unusual deficiencies; but these were much more than counterbalanced by a habit which often accompanies a sickly childhood, and is very often the commencement of a studious life,—the habit of desultory reading. The instructiveness of this is often

not properly comprehended. S. T. Coleridge used to say that he felt a great superiority over those who had not read—and fondly read—fairy tales in their childhood; he thought they wanted a sense which he possessed, the perception, or apperception—we do not know which he used to say it was—of the unity and wholeness of the universe. As to fairy tales, this is a hard saying; but as to desultory reading it is certainly true. Some people have known a time in life when there was no book they could not read. The fact of its being a book went immensely in its favour. In early life there is an opinion that the obvious thing to do with a horse is to ride it; of a cake, to eat it; of sixpence, to spend it: a few boys carry this further, and think the obviously natural thing to do with a book is to read it. There is an argument from design in the subject: if the book was not meant for that purpose, for what purpose was it meant? Of course, of any understanding of the works so perused there is no question or idea. There is a legend of Bentham, when still in long-clothes, climbing to the height of a huge stool and sitting there evening after evening with two candles engaged in the perusal of Rapin's history. It might just as well have been any other book. The doctrine of utility had not then dawned on its immortal teacher; *cui bono* was an idea unknown to him. He would have been ready to read about Egypt, about Spain, about the coals in Borneo, the teak-wood in India, the current in the river Mississippi, on natural history or human history, on theology or morals, on the state of the dark ages or the state of the light ages, on Augustulus or Lord Chatham, on the first century or the seventeenth, on the moon, the millennium, or the whole duty of man. Just then, in fact, reading is an end in itself. At that time of life you no more think of a future consequence, of the remote, the very remote possibility of deriving knowledge from the perusal of a book, than you expect so great a result from spinning a peg-top. You spin the top, and you read the book; and then that scene of life is exhausted. In such studies, of all prose perhaps the best is history. One page is so like another; battle No. 1 is so much on a par with battle No. 2. Truth may be, as they say, stranger than fiction, abstractedly and in itself; but in actual books, novels are certainly odder and more astounding than correct history. It will be said, what is the use of this? Why not leave the reading of great books till a great age? Why plague and perplex childhood with complex facts remote from its experience and inapprehensible by its imagination? The reply is, that though in all great and combined facts there is much which childhood cannot thoroughly imagine or comprehend, there is also in very many a great deal which can only be truly apprehended for the first time at that age. Catch an American of thirty;—tell him about the

battle of Marathon; what will he be able to comprehend of all that *you* mean by it; of all that halo which early impression and years of remembrance have cast around it? He may add up the killed and wounded, estimate the missing, and take the dimensions of Greece and Athens; but he will not seem to care much. He may say, "Well, sir, perhaps it was a smart thing in that small country; but it is a long time ago, and in *my* country James K. Burnup" did that which he will at length explain to you. Or try an experiment on yourself. Read the account of a Circassian victory, equal in numbers, in daring, in romance, to the old battle. Will you be able to feel about it at all in the same way? It is impossible. You cannot form a new set of associations; your mind is involved in pressing facts, your memory choked by a thousand details; the liveliness of fancy is gone with the childhood by which it was enlivened. Schamyl will never seem as great as Leonidas or Miltiades; Cnokemof, or whoever the Russian is, cannot be so imposing as Xerxes; the unpronounceable place cannot strike on your heart like Marathon or Plataea. Moreover, there is the further advantage which Coleridge shadowed forth in the remark we cited. Youth has a principle of consolidation. We begin with the whole. Small sciences are the labours of our manhood; but the round universe is the plaything of the boy. His fresh mind shoots out vaguely and crudely into the infinite and eternal. Nothing is hid from the depth of it: there are no boundaries to its vague and wandering vision. Early science, it has been said, begins in utter nonsense; it would be truer to say that it starts with boyish fancies. How absurd seem the notions of the first Greeks! Who could believe now that air or water was the principle, the pervading substance, the eternal material of all things? Such affairs will never explain a thick rock; they scarcely account for pea-soup; and what a white original for a green and sky-blue world! Yet people disputed in those ages not whether it was either of those substances, but which of them it was. And doubtless there was a great deal, at least in point of quantity, to be said on both sides. Boys are improved; but some in our own day have asked, "Mamma, I say, what did God make the world of?" and several, who did not venture on speech, have had an idea of some one gray primitive thing, have felt a difficulty as to how the red came, and wondered how marble could *ever* have been the same as moonshine. This is in truth the picture of life. We begin with the infinite and eternal, which we shall never apprehend; and these form a framework, a schedule, a set of co-ordinates to which we refer all which we learn later. At first, like the old Greek, "we look up to the whole sky, and are lost in the one and the all;" in the end we classify and enumerate, learn each star, calculate

distances, draw cramped diagrams on the unbounded sky, write a paper on α Cygni and a treatise on ϵ Draconis, map special facts upon the indefinite void, and engrave precise details on the infinite and everlasting. So in history; somehow the whole comes in boyhood; the details later and in manhood. The wonderful series going far back to the times of old patriarchs with their flocks and herds, the keen-eyed Greek, the stately Roman, the watching Jew, the uncouth Goth, the horrid Hun, the settled picture of the unchanging East, the restless shifting of the rapid West, the rise of the cold and classical civilisation, its fall, the rough impetuous middle ages, the vague warm picture of ourselves and home,—when did we learn these? Not yesterday nor to-day; but long ago, in the first dawn of reason, in the original flow of fancy. What we learn afterwards are but the accurate littlenesses of the great topic, the dates and tedious facts. Those who begin late learn only these; but the happy first feel the mystic associations and the progress of the whole.

There is no better illustration of all this than Gibbon. Few have begun early with a more desultory reading, and fewer still have described it so skilfully. "From the ancient I leaped to the modern world: many crude lumps of Speed, Rapin, Mezeray, Davila, Machiavel, Father Paul, Bower, &c., I devoured like so many novels; and I swallowed with the same voracious appetite the descriptions of India and China, of Mexico and Peru. My first introduction to the historic scenes which have since engaged so many years of my life must be ascribed to an accident. In the summer of 1751 I accompanied my father on a visit to Mr. Hoare's, in Wiltshire; but I was less delighted with the beauties of Stourhead than with discovering in the library a common book, the *Continuation of Echard's Roman History*, which is indeed executed with more skill and taste than the previous work. To me the reigns of the successors of Constantine were absolutely new; and I was immersed in the passage of the Goths over the Danube when the summons of the dinner-bell reluctantly dragged me from my intellectual feast. This transient glance served rather to irritate than to appease my curiosity; and as soon as I returned to Bath I procured the second and third volumes of Howel's *History of the World*, which exhibit the Byzantine period on a larger scale. Mahomet and his Saracens soon fixed my attention; and some instinct of criticism directed me to the genuine sources. Simon Ockley, an original in every sense, first opened my eyes; and I was led from one book to another till I had ranged round the circle of Oriental history. Before I was sixteen I had exhausted all that could be learned in English of the Arabs and Persians, the Tartars and Turks; and the same ardour urged me to guess at the French of

d'Herbelot, and to construe the barbarous Latin of Pocock's *Abulfaragius*." To this day the schoolboy-student of the Decline and Fall feels the traces of that schoolboy reading. Once, he is conscious, the author, like him, felt, and solely felt, the magnificent progress of the great story and the scenic aspect of marvellous events.

A more sudden effect was at hand. However exalted may seem the praises which we have given to loose and unplanned reading, we are not saying that it is the sole ingredient of a good education. Besides this sort of education, which some boys will voluntarily and naturally give themselves, there needs, of course, another and more rigorous kind, which must be impressed upon them from without. The terrible difficulty of early life—the *use* of pastors and masters—really is, that they compel boys to a distinct mastery of that which they do not wish to learn. There is nothing to be said for a preceptor who is not dry. Mr. Carlyle describes with bitter satire the fate of one of his heroes who was obliged to acquire whole systems of information in which he, the hero, saw no use, and which he kept as far as might be in a vacant corner of his mind. And this is the very point—dry language, tedious mathematics, a thumbed grammar, a detested slate, form gradually an interior separate intellect, exact in its information, rigid in its requirements, disciplined in its exercises. The two grow together, the early natural fancy touching the far extremities of the universe, lightly playing with the scheme of all things; the precise, compacted memory slowly accumulating special facts, exact habits, clear and painful conceptions. At last, as it were in a moment, the cloud breaks up, the division sweeps away; we find that in fact these exercises which puzzled us, these languages which we hated, these details which we despised, are the instruments of true thought, are the very keys and openings, the exclusive access to the knowledge which we loved.

In this second education the childhood of Gibbon had been very defective. He had never been placed under any rigid training. In his first boyhood he disputed with his aunt, "that were I master of Greek and Latin, I must interpret to myself in English the thoughts of the original, and that such extemporary versions must be inferior to the elaborate translation of professed scholars: a silly sophism," as he remarks, "which could not easily be confuted by a person ignorant of any other language than her own." Ill-health, a not very wise father, an ill-chosen succession of schools and pedagogues, prevented his acquiring exact knowledge in the regular subjects of study. His own description is the best—"erudition that might have puzzled a doctor, and ignorance of which a schoolboy should have been ashamed." The amiable Mr. Francis, who was to have repaired the deficiency,

went to London, and forgot him. On a sudden his father put on his hat, took a resolution, and sent him to Oxford at sixteen.

It is probable that a worse place could not have been found. The University of Oxford was then perhaps at the very nadir of her history and efficiency. The public professorial training of the middle ages had died away, and the intramural collegiate system of the present time had not begun. The University had ceased to be a teaching body, and had not yet become an examining body. "The professors," says Adam Smith, who had studied there, "have given up almost the pretence of lecturing." "The examination," said a great judge some years later, "was a farce in my time. I was asked who founded University College; and I said, though the fact is now doubted, that King Alfred founded it; and *that* was the examination." The colleges, deprived of the superintendence and watchfulness of their natural sovereign, fell, as Gibbon remarks, into "port and prejudice." The fellows were a close corporation; they were chosen from every conceivable motive—because they were respectable men, because they were good fellows, because they were brothers of other fellows, because their fathers had patronage in the church. Men so appointed could not be expected to be very diligent in the instruction of youth; many colleges did not even profess it; that of All Souls has continued down to our own time to deny that it has any thing to do with it. Undoubtedly a person who came thither accurately and rigidly drilled in technical scholarship found many means and some motives to pursue it. Some tutorial system probably existed at most colleges. Learning was not wholly useless in the church. The English gentleman has ever loved a nice and classical scholarship. But these advantages were open only to persons who had received a very rigid and peculiar training, and who were voluntarily disposed to discipline themselves still more. To the mass of mankind the University was a "graduating machine;" the colleges, monopolist residences,—hotels without bells.

Taking the place as it stood, the lot of Gibbon may be thought rather fortunate. He was placed at Magdalen, whose fascinating walks, so beautiful in the later autumn, still recal the name of Addison, the example of the merits, as Gibbon is of the deficiencies, of Oxford. His first tutor was, in his own opinion, "one of the best of the tribe." "Dr. Waldegrave was a learned and pious man, of a mild disposition, strict morals, and abstemious life, who seldom mingled in the politics or the jollity of the college. But his knowledge of the world was confined to the University; his learning was of the last, rather than of the present age; his temper was indolent; his faculties, which were not of the first rate, had been relaxed

by the climate; and he was satisfied, like his fellows, with the slight and superficial discharge of an important trust. As soon as my tutor had sounded the insufficiency of his disciple in school-learning, he proposed that we should read every morning, from ten to eleven, the comedies of Terence. The sum of my improvement in the University of Oxford is confined to three or four Latin plays; and even the study of an elegant classic, which might have been illustrated by a comparison of ancient and modern theatres, was reduced to a dry and literal interpretation of the author's text. During the first weeks I constantly attended these lessons in my tutor's room; but as they appeared equally devoid of profit and pleasure, I was once tempted to try the experiment of a formal apology. The apology was accepted with a smile. I repeated the offence with less ceremony; the excuse was admitted with the same indulgence: the slightest motive of laziness or indisposition, the most trifling avocation at home or abroad, was allowed as a worthy impediment; nor did my tutor appear conscious of my absence or neglect. Had the hour of lecture been constantly filled, a single hour was a small portion of my academic leisure. No plan of study was recommended for my use; no exercises were prescribed for his inspection; and, at the most precious season of youth, whole days and weeks were suffered to elapse without labour or amusement, without advice or account."

The name of his second tutor is concealed in asterisks, and the sensitive conscience of Dean Milman will not allow him to insert a name "which *Gibbon* thought proper to suppress." The account, however, of the anonymous person is sufficiently graphic. "Dr. * * * * well remembered that he had a salary to receive, and only forgot that he had a duty to perform. Instead of guiding the studies and watching over the behaviour of his disciple, I was never summoned to attend even the ceremony of a lecture; and excepting one voluntary visit to his rooms, during the eight months of his titular office the tutor and pupil lived in the same college as strangers to each other." It added to the evils of this neglect, that *Gibbon* was much younger than most of the students; and that his temper, which was through life reserved, was then very shy. His appearance, too, was odd; "a thin little figure, with a large head, disputing and arguing with the greatest ability." Of course he was a joke among undergraduates; he consulted his tutor as to studying Arabic, and was seen buying *La Bibliothèque Orientale d'Herbelot*, and immediately a legend was diffused that he had turned Mahomedan. The random cast was not so far from the mark: cut off by peculiarities from the society of young people; deprived of regular tuition and systematic employment; tumbling about

among crude masses of heterogeneous knowledge; alone with the heated brain of youth,—he did what an experienced man would expect—he framed a theory of all things. No doubt it seemed to him the most natural thing in the world. Was he to be the butt of ungenial wine-parties, or spend his lonely hours on shreds of languages? Was he not to know the *truth*? There were the old problems, the everlasting difficulties, the *maenia mundi*, the Hercules' pillars of the human imagination—"fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute." Surely these should come first; when we had learned the great landmarks, understood the guiding-stars, we might amuse ourselves with small points, and make a plaything of curious information. What particular theory the mind frames in these circumstances is a good deal matter of special accident. The *data* for considering these difficulties are not within its reach. Whether man be or be not born to solve the "mystery of the knowable," he certainly is not born to solve it at seventeen, with the first hot rush of the untrained mind. The selection of Gibbon was remarkable: he became a Roman Catholic.

It seems now so natural that an Oxford man should take this step, that one can hardly understand the astonishment it created. Lord Sheffield tells us that the Privy Council interfered; and with good administrative judgment examined a London bookseller—some Mr. Lewis—who had no concern in it. In the manor-house of Buriton it would have probably created less sensation if "dear Edward" had announced his intention of becoming a monkey. The English belief always is that the Papist is a kind of *creature*; some think that the Oxford student is its young: and every sound mind would prefer a beloved child to produce a tail, a hide of hair, and a taste for nuts, in comparison with transubstantiation, wax-candles, and a belief in the glories of Mary.

What exact motives impelled Gibbon to this step cannot now be certainly known; the autobiography casts a mist over them; but from what appears, his conversion partly much resembled, and partly altogether differed from, the Oxford conversions of our own time. We hear nothing of the notes of a church, or the sin of the Reformation; and Gibbon had not an opportunity of even rejecting Mr. Sewell's theory that it is "a holy obligation to acquiesce in the opinions of your grandmother." His memoirs throw a halo of great names over the occurrence—Bossuet, the *History of Protestant Variations*, &c. &c.—and he speaks with becoming dignity of falling by a noble hand. He mentioned to Lord Sheffield, as having had a preponderating influence over him, the works of Father Parsons, who lived in Queen Elizabeth's time. But in all probability these were

secondary persuasions, justifications after the event. No young man, or hardly any young man of seventeen, was ever converted by a systematic treatise, especially if written in another age, wearing an obsolete look, speaking a language which scarcely seems that of this world. There is an unconscious reasoning: "The world has had this book before it so long, and has withstood it. There must be something wrong; it seems all right on the surface, but a flaw there must be." The mass of the volumes, too, is unfavourable. "All the treatises in the world," says the young convert in *Loss and Gain*, "are not equal to giving one a view in a moment." What the youthful mind requires is this short decisive argument, this view in a moment, this flash as it were of the understanding, which settles all, and diffuses a conclusive light at once and for ever over the whole. It is so much the pleasanter if the young mind can strike this view out for itself, from materials which are forced upon it from the controversies of the day; if it can find a certain solution of pending questions, and show itself wiser even than the wisest of its own, the very last age. So far as appears, this was the fortune of Gibbon. "It was not long," he says, "since Dr. Middleton's *Free Inquiry* had sounded an alarm in the theological world; much ink and much gall had been spent in defence of the primitive miracles; and the two dullest of their champions were crowned with academic honours by the University of Oxford. The name of Middleton was unpopular; and his proscription very naturally led me to peruse his writings and those of his antagonists." It is not difficult to discover in this work easy and striking arguments which might lead an untaught mind to the communion of Rome. As to the peculiar belief of its author there has been much controversy, with which we have not here the least concern; but the natural conclusion to which it would lead a simple intellect is, that all miracles are equally certain or equally uncertain.

"It being agreed, then," says the acute controversialist, "that in the original promise of these miraculous gifts there is no intimation of any particular period to which their continuance was limited, the next question is, by what sort of evidence the precise time of their duration is to be determined? But to this point one of the writers just referred to excuses himself, as we have seen, from giving any answer; and thinks it sufficient to declare in general that *the earliest fathers unanimously affirm them to have continued down to their times*. Yet he has not told us, as he ought to have done, to what age he limits the character of the *earliest fathers*; whether to the second or to the third century, or, with the generality of our writers, means also to include the fourth. But to whatever age he may restrain it, the

difficulty at last will be to assign a reason why we must needs stop there. In the mean while, by his appealing thus to the *earliest fathers* only as unanimous on this article, a common reader would be apt to infer that the later fathers are more cold or diffident, or divided upon it; whereas the reverse of this is true, and the more we descend from those earliest fathers the more strong and explicit we find their successors in attesting the perpetual succession and daily exertion of the same miraculous powers in their several ages; so that, if the cause must be determined by *the unanimous consent of fathers*, we shall find as much reason to believe that those powers were continued even to the latest ages as to any other, how early and primitive soever, after the days of the apostles. But the same writer gives us two reasons why he does not choose to say any thing upon the subject of their duration; 1st, because *there is not light enough in history to settle it*; 2dly, because *the thing itself is of no concern to us*. As to his first reason, I am at a loss to conceive what further light a professed advocate of the primitive ages and fathers can possibly require in this case. For as far as the church-historians can illustrate or throw light upon any thing, there is not a single point in all history so constantly, explicitly, and unanimously affirmed by them all, as the continual succession of these powers through all ages, from the earliest father who first mentions them down to the time of the Reformation. Which same succession is still further deduced by persons of the most eminent character for their probity, learning, and dignity in the Romish church, to this very day. So that the only doubt which can remain with us is, whether the church-historians are to be trusted or not; for if any credit be due to them in the present case, it must reach either to all or to none; because the reason of believing them in any one age will be found to be of equal force in all, as far as it depends on the characters of the persons attesting, or the nature of the things attested."

In *terms* this and the whole of Middleton's argument is so shaped as to avoid including in its scope the miracles of Scripture, which are mentioned throughout with eulogiums and acquiescence, and so as to make you doubt whether the author believed them or not. This is exactly one of the pretences which the young strong mind delights to tear down, which would say, "This writer evidently *means* that the apostolic miracles have just as much evidence and no more than the popish or the patristic; and how strong"—for Middleton is a master of telling statement—"he shows that evidence to be! I won't give up the apostolic miracles, I cannot; yet I must believe what has so much of historical testimony in its favour. It is no *reductio ad absurdum* that we must go over to the church of Rome; it is

the most diffused of Christian creeds, the oldest of Christian churches." And so the argument of this sceptic becomes, as often since, the most efficient instrument of the all-believing and all-determining church.

The consternation of Gibbon's relatives seems to have been enormous. They cast about what to do. From the experience of Oxford, they perhaps thought that it would be useless to have recourse to the Anglican clergy; they had tried their best, it was perhaps fancied, and had failed. So they took him to Mr. Mallet, a deist, perhaps an atheist, to see if he could do any thing; but he did nothing. Their next step was nearly as extraordinary. They placed him at Lausanne in the house of M. Pavilliard, a French Protestant minister. After the easy income, complete independence, and unlimited credit of an English undergraduate, he was thrown into a foreign country, deprived, as he says, by ignorance of the language both of "speech and hearing,"—in the position of a schoolboy, with a small allowance of pocket-money, and without the Epicurean comforts on which he already set some value. He laments the "indispensable comfort of a servant," and the "sordid and uncleanly table of Madame Pavilliard." In our own day the watchful sagacity of Cardinal Wiseman would hardly allow a promising convert of expectations and talents to remain unsolaced in so pitiful a situation; we should hear of some soothing offers of flight or succour, of some gentle insinuation of a popish domestic and interesting repasts. But the attention of the Holy See a hundred years ago was little directed to our English youth, and Gibbon was left to endure his position.

It is curious that he made himself comfortable. Though destitute of external comforts which he did not despise, he found what was the greatest luxury to his disposition, steady study and regular tuition. His tutor was, of course, to convert him if he could; but as they had no language in common, there was the preliminary occupation of teaching French. During five years both tutor and pupil steadily exerted themselves to repair the defects of a neglected and ill-grounded education. We hear of the perusal of Terence, Virgil, Horace, and Tacitus. Cicero was translated into French, and translated back again into Latin. In both languages the pupil's progress was sound and good. From letters of his which still exist, it is clear that he then acquired the exact and steady knowledge of Latin of which he afterwards made so much use. His circumstances compelled him to master French. If his own letters are to be trusted, he would be an example of his own doctrine, that no one is thoroughly master of more than one language at a time; they read like the letters of a Frenchman trying and failing to write English. But perhaps

there was some wish to magnify his continental progress, and towards the end of the time some wish to make his friends fear he was forgetting his own language.

Meantime the work of conversion was not forgotten. In some letters which are still extant, M. Pavilliard celebrates the triumph of his logic. "J'ai renversé," says the pastor, "l'infailibilité de l'église; j'ai prouvé que jamais St. Pierre n'a été chef des apôtres; que quand il l'aurait été, le pape n'est point son successeur; qu'il est douteux que St. Pierre ait jamais été à Rome, mais supposé qu'il y ait été, il n'a pas été évêque de cette ville; que la transubstantiation est une invention humaine, et peu ancienne dans l'église," &c., and so on through the usual list of Protestant arguments. He magnifies perhaps a little Gibbon's strength of conviction, as it makes the success of his own arguments seem more splendid; but states two curious things, first, that Gibbon at least *pretended* to believe in the Pretender, and what is more amazing still—all but incredible—that he fasted. A curious youth for a sceptical and Epicurean historian!

It is probable, however, that the skill of the Swiss pastor was not the really operating cause of the event. Perhaps experience shows that the converts which Rome has made with the threat of unbelief and the weapons of the sceptic have rarely been permanent or advantageous to her. It is at best but a dangerous logic to drive men to the edge and precipice of scepticism, in the hope that they will recoil in horror to the very centre of credulity. It may happen that men may show their courage—that they will vanquish the *argumentum ad terrorem*—that they will not find scepticism so terrible. This last was Gibbon's case. A more insidious adversary than the Swiss theology was at hand to sap his Roman Catholic belief. Pavilliard had a fair French library—not ill-stored in the recent publications of that age—of which he allowed his pupil the continual use. It was as impossible to open any of them and not come in contact with infidelity, as to come to England and not to see a green field. Scepticism is not so much a part of the French literature of that day as its animating spirit—its essence, its vitality. You can no more cut it out and separate it, than you can extract from Wordsworth his conception of nature, or from Swift his common sense. And it is of the subtlest kind. It has little in common with the rough disputation of the English deist, or the perplexing learning of the German theologian; but works with a tool more insinuating than either. It is, in truth, but the spirit of the world, which does not argue, but assume; which does not so much elaborate as hint; which does not examine, but suggest. With the traditions of the church it contrasts traditions of its own; its technicalities are *bon sens, l'usage du monde, le fanatisme,*

Penthousiasme; to high hopes, noble sacrifices, awful lives, it opposes quiet ease, skilful comfort, placid calm, polished indifference. Old as transubstantiation may be, it is not older than Horace and Lucian. Lord Byron, in the well-known lines, has coupled the names of the two literary exiles on the Leman Lake. The page of Voltaire could not but remind Gibbon that the scepticism from which he had revolted was compatible with literary eminence and European fame—gave a piquancy to ordinary writing—was the very expression of caustic caution and gentlemanly calm.

The grave and erudite habits of Gibbon soon developed themselves. Independently of these abstruse theological disputations, he spent many hours daily—rising early and reading carefully—on classical and secular learning. He was not, however, wholly thus engrossed. There was in the neighbourhood of Lausanne a certain Mademoiselle Curchod; a studious and cultivated, it might almost be said a rational damsel. She showed this peculiar quality in her taste. To form an attachment to the Roman Empire is a difficult attainment for any young woman; but Mademoiselle Curchod went much further than a sentimental appreciation of the Decline and Fall, she professed to feel real affection for a grave and lumbering banker—M. Necker, afterwards the slow premier in a quick revolution—the author of various financial treatises, French sums, and tedious theories, to which this Genevese beauty, however, devoted much of her attention. But this was in a later time: Gibbon was, it seems, her first love;—history on Mondays, finance only on Tuesdays, appears to have been the rule of that well-regulated intellect. The feelings of Gibbon, it can hardly be supposed, were likely to do him any harm. However, there was an intimacy, a flirtation, an engagement—when it suddenly struck one or the other that they neither of them had any money. That the young lady should procure any seems to have been out of the question; and Gibbon, “taking,” what Mr. James often terms “the initiative that becomes a man,” wrote to his father. The reply was unfavourable. Gibbon’s mother was dead; Mr. Gibbon senior was married again; and even in other circumstances would have been scarcely ready to encourage a romantic engagement to a lady with nothing. She spoke no English, too, and marriage with a person speaking only French was then regarded as a most unnatural event; forbidden, not indeed by the literal law of the church, but by those higher instinctive principles of our nature, to which the bluntest own obedience. No father could be expected to violate at once pecuniary duties and patriotic principles. Mr. Gibbon senior forbade the match. The young lady does not seem to have been quite ready to relinquish all hope;

but she had shown a grave taste, and fixed her affections on a sound and cold mind. "I sighed," narrates the historian, "as a lover; but I obeyed as a son." "I have seen," says M. Suard, "the letter in which Gibbon communicated to Mademoiselle Curchod the opposition of his father to their marriage. The first pages are tender and melancholy, as might be expected from an unhappy lover; the latter become by degrees calm and reasonable; and the letter concludes with these words: *C'est pourquoi, mademoiselle, j'ai l'honneur d'être votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur, Edward Gibbon.*" Her father died soon afterwards, and "she retired to Geneva, where, by teaching young ladies, she earned a hard subsistence for herself and her mother;" but the tranquil disposition of her historical admirer preserved him from any romantic display of sympathy and fidelity. He continued to study various readings in Cicero, as well as the passage of Hannibal over the Alps; and with these affectionate resources set sentiment at defiance. Yet thirty years later the lady, then the wife of the most conspicuous man in Europe, was able to suggest useful reflections to an aged bachelor, obscurely and slightly dreaming of a superannuated marriage: "Gardez-vous, monsieur, de former un de ces liens tardifs: le mariage qui rend heureux dans l'âge mûr, c'est celui qui fut contracté dans la jeunesse. Alors seulement la réunion est parfaite, les goûts se communiquent, les sentimens se répandent, les idées deviennent communes, les facultés intellectuelles se modelent mutuellement. Toute la vie est double, et toute la vie est une prolongation de la jeunesse; car les impressions de l'âme commandent aux yeux, et la beauté qui n'est plus conserve encore son empire; mais pour vous, monsieur, dans toute la vigueur de la pensée, lorsque toute l'existence est décidée, l'on ne pourroit sans un miracle trouver une femme digne de vous; et une association d'un genre imparfait rappelle toujours la statue d'Horace, qui joint à une belle tête le corps d'un stupide poisson. Vous êtes marié avec la gloire." She was then a cultivated and instructed French lady, giving an account of the reception of the Decline and Fall at Paris, and expressing rather peculiar ideas on the style of Tacitus. The world had come round to her side, and she explains to her old lover rather well her happiness with M. Necker.

After living nearly five years at Lausanne, Gibbon returned to England. Continental residence has made a great alteration in many Englishmen; but few have undergone so complete a metamorphosis as Edward Gibbon. He left his own country a hot-brained and ill-taught youth, willing to sacrifice friends and expectations for a superstitious and half-known creed; he returned a cold and accomplished man, master of many accurate

ideas, little likely to hazard any coin for any faith: already, it is probable, inclined in secret to a cautious scepticism; placing thereby, as it were, upon a system the frigid prudence and unventuring incredulity congenial to his character. His change of character changed his position among his relatives. His father, he says, met him as a friend; and they continued thenceforth on a footing of "easy intimacy." Especially after the little affair of Mademoiselle Curchod, and the "very sensible view he took in that instance of the matrimonial relation," there can be but little question that Gibbon was justly regarded as a most safe young man, singularly prone to large books, and a little too fond of French phrases and French ideas; yet with a great feeling of common sense, and a wise preference of permanent money to transitory sentiment. His father allowed him a moderate, and but a moderate income, which he husbanded with great affection, and only voluntarily expended in the purchase and acquisition of serious volumes. He lived for many years, till his father's death and afterwards, an externally idle but really studious life, varied by tours in France and Italy; the toils of which, though not in description very formidable, somewhat sorely tried a sedentary habit and rather corpulent body. The only English avocation which he engaged in was, oddly enough, war. It does not seem the most likely in this pacific country, nor does he seem exactly the man for *la grande guerre*; but so it was; and the fact is an example of a really Anglican invention. The English have discovered pacific war. We may not be able to kill people as well as the French, or fit out and feed distant armaments as neatly as they do; but we are unrivalled at a quiet armament here at home which never kills any body, and never wants to be sent any where. A "constitutional militia" is a beautiful example of the mild efficacy of civilisation, which can convert even the "great manslaying profession" (as Carlyle calls it) into a quiet and dining association. Into this force Gibbon was admitted; and immediately, contrary to his anticipations, and very much against his will, was called out for permanent duty. The hero of the *corps* was a certain dining Sir Thomas, who used at the end of each new bottle to announce with increasing joy how much soberer he had become. What his fellow-officers thought of Gibbon's French predilections and large volumes it is not difficult to conjecture; and he on his side complains bitterly of the interruption to his studies. However, his easy composed nature soon made itself at home; his polished tact partially concealed from the "mess" his recondite pursuits, and he contrived to make the Hampshire armament of classical utility. "I read," he says, "the Analysis of Cæsar's Campaign in Africa. Every motion of that great general is

laid open with a critical sagacity. A complete military history of his campaigns would do almost as much honour to M. Guichardt as to Cæsar. This finished the *Mémoires*, which gave me a much clearer notion of ancient tactics than I ever had before. Indeed, my own military knowledge was of some service to me, as I am well acquainted with the modern discipline and exercise of a battalion. So that though much inferior to M. Folard and M. Guichardt, who had seen service, I am a much better judge than Salmasius, Casaubon, or Lipsius; mere scholars, who perhaps had never seen a battalion under arms."

The real occupation of Gibbon, as this quotation might suggest, was his reading; and this was of a peculiar sort. There are many kinds of readers, and each has a sort of perusal suitable to his kind. There is the voracious reader, like Dr. Johnson, who extracts with grasping appetite the large features, the gross essence of a trembling publication, and rejects the rest with contempt and disregard. There is the subtle reader, who pursues with fine attention the most imperceptible and delicate ramifications of an interesting topic, marks slight traits, notes changing manners, has a keen eye for the character of his author, is minutely attentive to every prejudice and awake to every passion, watches syllables and waits on words, is alive to the light air of nice associations which float about every subject—the meats in the bright sunbeam—the delicate gradations of the passing shadows. There is the stupid reader, who prefers dull books—is generally to be known by his disregard of small books and English books, and likes masses in modern Latin, *Grævius de torpore mirabili; Horrificus de gravitate sapientiæ*. But Gibbon was not of any of these classes. He was what common people would call a matter-of-fact, and philosophers now-a-days a *positive* reader. No disciple of M. Comte could attend more strictly to precise and provable phenomena. His favourite points are those which can be weighed and measured. Like the dull reader, he had perhaps a preference for huge books in unknown tongues; but, on the other hand, he wished those books to contain real and accurate information. He liked the firm earth of positive knowledge. His fancy was not flexible enough for exquisite refinement, his imagination too slow for light and wandering literature; but he had no taste for dullness in itself, and had a prompt acumen for serious eloquence. Thus "the author of the *Adventurer*, No. 127 (Mr. Joseph Warton, concealed under the signature of Z), concludes his ingenious parallel of the ancients and moderns by the following remark: 'That age will never again return, when a Pericles, after walking with Plato in a portico built by Phidias and painted by Apelles, might repair to hear a pleading of

Demosthenes or a tragedy of Sophocles.' It will never return, because it never existed. Pericles (who died in the fourth year of the LXXXIXth Olympiad. ant. Ch. 429, Dio. Sic. l. xii. 46) was confessedly the patron of Phidias, and the contemporary of Sophocles; but he could enjoy no very great pleasure in the conversation of Plato, who was born the same year that he himself died (Diogenes Laertius in Platone, v. Stanley's History of Philosophy, p. 154). The error is still more extraordinary with regard to Apelles and Demosthenes, since both the painter and the orator survived Alexander the Great, whose death is above a century posterior to that of Pericles (in 323). And indeed, though Athens was the seat of every liberal art from the days of Themistocles to those of Demetrius Phalereus, yet no particular era will afford Mr. Warton the complete synchronism he seems to wish for; as tragedy was deprived of her famous triumvirate before the arts of philosophy and eloquence had attained the perfection which they soon after received from the hands of Plato, Aristotle, and Demosthenes."

And wonderful is it for what Mr. Hallam calls "the languid students of our present age" to turn over the journal of his daily studies. It is true, it seems to have been revised by himself; and so great a narrator would group facts nicely with which he was so familiar; but allowing any discount (if we may use such a mean word about a noble being) for the skilful art of the impressive historian, there will yet remain in the *Extraits de mon Journal* a wonderful monument of learned industry. You may open any where. "*Dissertation on the Medal of Smyrna*, by M. de Boze: replete with erudition and taste; containing curious researches on the pre-eminence of the cities of Asia.—*Researches on the Polybus*, by Mr. Trembley. A new world: throwing light on physics, but darkening metaphysics.—*Vegetius's Institutions*. This writer on tactics has good general notions; but his particular account of the Roman discipline is deformed by confusion and anachronisms." Or, "I this day began a very considerable task, which was, to read Cluverius' *Italia Antiqua* in two volumes folio, Leyden 1624, Elzevirs;" and it appears he did read it as well as begin it, which is the point where most enterprising men would have failed. From the time of his residence at Lausanne his Latin scholarship had been sound and good; and the best part of his studies was directed to the illustration of the best Roman authors; but it is curious to find on the 16th of August 1761, after his return to England, and when he was twenty-four years old, the following extract: "I have at last finished the *Iliad*. As I undertook it to improve myself in the Greek language, which I had totally neglected for some years past, and to which I never applied myself with a

proper attention, I must give a reason why I began with Homer, and that contrary to Le Clerc's advice. I had two: 1st, As Homer is the most ancient Greek author (excepting perhaps Hesiod) who is now extant; and as he was not only the poet, but the lawgiver, the theologian, the historian, and the philosopher, of the ancients, every succeeding writer is full of quotations from, or allusions to, his writings, which it would be difficult to understand without a previous knowledge of them. In this situation, was it not natural to follow the ancients themselves, who always began their studies by the perusal of Homer? 2dly, No writer ever treated such a variety of subjects. As every part of civil, military, or economical life is introduced into his poems, and as the simplicity of his age allowed him to call every thing by its proper name, almost the whole compass of the Greek tongue is comprised in Homer. I have so far met with the success I hoped for, that I have acquired a great facility in reading the language, and treasured up a very great stock of words. What I have rather neglected is, the grammatical construction of them, and especially the many various inflexions of the verbs. In order to acquire that dry but necessary branch of knowledge, I propose bestowing some time every morning on the perusal of the *Greek Grammar of Port Royal*, as one of the best extant. I believe that I read nearly one-half of Homer like a mere school-boy, not enough master of the words to elevate myself to the poetry. The remainder I read with a good deal of care and criticism, and made many observations on them. Some I have inserted here; for the rest I shall find a proper place. Upon the whole, I think that Homer's few faults (for some he certainly has) are lost in the variety of his beauties. I expected to have finished him long before. The delay was owing partly to the circumstances of my way of life and avocations, and partly to my own fault; for while every one looks on me as a prodigy of application, I know myself how strong a propensity I have to indolence." Posterity will confirm the contemporary theory that he was a "prodigy" of steady study. Those who know what the Greek language is, how much of the Decline and Fall depends on Greek authorities, how few errors the keen criticism of divines and scholars has been able to detect in his use of them, will be best able to appreciate the patient every-day labour which could alone repair the early neglect of so difficult an attainment.

It is odd how little Gibbon wrote, at least for the public, in early life. More than twenty-two years elapsed from his first return from Lausanne to the appearance of the first volume of his great work, and in that long interval his only important publication, if it can indeed be so called, was a French essay,

Sur l'Etude de la Littérature, which contains some sensible remarks, and shows much regular reading; but which is on the whole a "conceivable treatise," and would be wholly forgotten if it had been written by any one else. It was little read in England, and must have been a serious difficulty to his friends in the militia; but the Parisians read it, or said they had read it, which is more in their way, and the fame of being a French author was a great aid to him in foreign society. It flattered, indeed, the French *literati* more than any one can now fancy. The French had then the idea that it was uncivilised to speak any other language, and the notion of *writing* any other seemed quite a *bêtise*. By a miserable misfortune you might not know French, but at least you could conceal it assiduously; white paper any how might go unsoiled; posterity at least should not hear of such ignorance. The Parisian was to be the universal tongue. And it did not seem absurd, especially to those only slightly acquainted with foreign countries at all, that they might be in part successful. Political eminence had given their language a diplomatic supremacy. There was no German literature at all; Italy had ceased to produce important books. There was only England left to dispute the literary despotism; and such an attempt as Gibbon's was a peculiarly acceptable flattery, for it seemed as if her most cultivated men were beginning to abandon their own tongue, and to write like other nations in the cosmopolitan *lingua franca*. A few far-seeing observers, however, even then contemplated the train of events which at the present day give such a preponderating influence to our own writers, and make it an arduous matter even to explain the conceivableness of the French ambition. Of all men living then or since, David Hume was the most likely from prejudice and habit to take an unfavourable view of English literary influence; he had more literary fame than he deserved in France and less in England; yet his cold and discriminating intellect at once emancipated him from the sophistries which imposed on those less watchful. He wrote to Gibbon, "I have only one objection, derived from the language in which it is written. Why do you compose in French, and carry faggots into the wood, as Horace says with regard to Romans who wrote in Greek? I grant that you have a like motive to those Romans, and adopt a language much more generally diffused than your native tongue; but have you not remarked the fate of those two ancient languages in the following ages? The Latin, though then less celebrated and confined to more narrow limits, has in some measure outlived the Greek, and is now more generally understood by men of letters. Let the French, therefore, triumph in the present diffusion of their tongue. Our solid and increasing establishments in Ame-

rica, where we need less dread the inundation of barbarians, promise a superior stability and duration to the English language." The cool sceptic was correct. The great breeding people have gone out and multiplied; colonies in every clime attest our success; French is the *patois* of Europe; English is the language of the world.

Gibbon took the advice of his remarkable friend, and prepared himself for the composition of his great work in English. His studies were destined, however, to undergo an interruption. "Yesterday morning," he wrote to a friend, "about half an hour after seven, as I was destroying an army of barbarians, I heard a double rap at the door, and my friend Mr. Eliot was soon introduced. After some idle conversation, he told me that if I was desirous of being in parliament, he had an independent seat very much at my service." The borough was Liskeard; and the epithet independent is, of course, ironical, Mr. Eliot being himself the constituency of that place. The offer was accepted, and one of the most learned of members of parliament took his seat.

The political life of Gibbon is briefly described. He was a supporter of Lord North. That well-known statesman was, in the most exact sense, a representative man,—although representative of the very class of persons most out of favour with the transcendental thinkers, who invented that name. Germans deny it, but it is true that in every country common opinions are very common. In all lands, both now and of old, there exists the easy and comfortable mass; quiet, sagacious, short-sighted,—such as the Jews whom Rabshakeh tempted by their vine and their fig-tree, such as the English with their snug dining-room and after-dinner nap, domestic happiness and Bullo coal; sensible, solid, practical men, without stretching irritable reason, but with a placid supine instinct; without originality and without folly; judicious in their dealings, respected in the world; wanting little, sacrificing nothing; good-tempered people in a word, "caring for nothing until they are themselves hurt." Lord North was of this class. You could hardly make him angry. "No doubt," tapping his fat sides, "I am that odious thing a minister; and I believe other people wish they were so too." Profound people look deeply for the maxims of his policy; and it being on the surface, of course they fail to find it. He did not what the mind but what the *body* of the community wanted to have done; he appealed to the real people, the large English commonplace herd. His abilities were great; and with them he did what people with no abilities wished to do, and could not do. Lord Brougham has just published his Letters to the King, showing that which partial extracts had made known before, that he was quite opposed to the war he was carrying on; was convinced it could

not succeed; hardly, in fact, wished it might. Why did he carry it on? *Vox populi*, the voice of the well-dressed wigs, commanded it to be done; and he cheerfully sacrificed American people, who were nothing to him, to English, who were something, and a king, who was much. Gibbon was the very man to support such a ruler. His historical writings have given him a posthumous eminence; but in his own time he was doubtless thought a sensible safe man, of ordinary thoughts and intelligible actions. To do him justice, he did not pretend to be a hero. "You know," he wrote to his friend Deyverdun, "*que je suis entré au parlement sans patriotisme, sans ambition, et que toutes mes vues se bornoient à la place commode et honnête d'un lord of trade.*" Wise in his generation was written on his brow. He quietly and gently supported the policy of his time.

Even, however, amid the fatigue of parliamentary attendance,—the fatigue, in fact, of attending a nocturnal and oratorical club, where you met the best people, who could not speak, as well as a few of the worst, who always *would*,—Gibbon's history made much progress. The first volume, a quarto, one-sixth of the whole, was published in the spring of 1776, and at once raised his fame to a high point. Ladies actually read it—read about Bœtica and Tarraconensis, the Roman legions and the tribunitian powers. Grave scholars wrote dreary commendations. "The first impression," he writes, "was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand; and my bookseller's property was twice invaded by the pirates of Dublin. My book was on every table"—tables must have been rather few in that age—"and almost on every toilette; the historian was crowned by the taste or fashion of the day; nor was the general voice disturbed by the barking of any profound critic." The noise penetrated deep into the unlearned classes. Mr. Sheridan, who never read any thing "on principle," said that the crimes of Warren Hastings surpassed any thing to be found in the "correct sentences of Tacitus or the *luminous* page of Gibbon." Some one seems to have been struck with the jet of learning, and questioned the great wit. "I said," he replied, "*voluminous.*"

History, it is said, is of no use; at least a great critic, who is understood to have in the press a very elaborate work in that kind, not long since seemed to allege that writings of this sort did not establish a theory of the universe, and were therefore of no avail. But whatever may be the use of this sort of composition in itself and abstractedly, it is certainly of great use relatively and to literary men. Consider the position of a person of that species. He sits beside a library-fire, with nice white paper,

a good pen, a capital style, and nothing to describe; of course he is an able man, and of course has an active intellect, beside wonderful culture; but still one cannot always have original ideas. Every day cannot be an era; a train of new speculation very often will not be found; and how dull it is to make it your business to write, to stay by yourself in a room to write, and then to have nothing to say! It is dreary work mending seven pens, and waiting for a theory to "turn up." What a gain if something would happen! then one could describe it. Something has happened, and that something is history. On this account, since a remarkably grave Greek discovered this plan for a serious immortality, a series of accomplished men have seldom been found wanting to derive a literary capital from their active and barbarous kindred. Perhaps when a Visigoth broke a head, he thought that that was all. Not so; he was making history; Gibbon has written it down.

The manner of writing history is as characteristic of the narrator as the actions are of the persons who are related to have performed them; often much more so. It may be generally defined as a view of one age taken by another; a picture of a series of men and women painted by one of another series. Of course, this definition seems to exclude contemporary history; but if we look into the matter carefully, is there such a thing? What are all the best and most noted works that claim the title—memoirs, scraps, materials—composed by men of like passions with the people they speak of, involved it may be in the events they speak of, and therefore describing them with the partiality and narrowness of an eager actor; or even worse, by men far apart from them in a monkish solitude, familiar with the lettuces of the convent-garden, but hearing only faint dim murmurs of the great transactions which they slowly jot down in the barren chronicle: these are not to be named in the same short breath, or included in the same narrow word, with the equable, poised, philosophic narrative of the retrospective historian. In the great histories there are two topics of interest—the man as a type of the age in which he lives,—the events and manners of the age he is describing; very often almost all the interest is the contrast of the two.

You should do every thing, said Lord Chesterfield, in minuet time. It was in that time that Gibbon wrote his history, and such was the manner of the age. You fancy him in a suit of flowered velvet, with a bag and sword, wisely smiling, composedly rounding his periods. You seem to see the grave bows, the formal politeness, the finished deference. You perceive the minuetic action accompanying the words: "Give," it would say, "Augustus a chair: Zenobia, the humblest of your slaves:

Odoacer, permit me to correct the defect in your attire." As the slap-dash sentences of a rushing critic express the hasty impatience of modern manners, so the deliberate emphasis, the slow acumen, the steady argument, the impressive narration bring before us what is now a tradition, the picture of the correct eighteenth-century gentleman, who never failed in a measured politeness, partly because it was due in propriety towards others, and partly because from his own dignity it was due most obviously to himself.

And not only is this true of style, but may be extended to other things also. There is no one of the many literary works produced in the eighteenth century more thoroughly characteristic of it than Gibbon's history. The special characteristic of that age is its clinging to the definite and palpable; it had a taste beyond every thing for what it called solid information. In literature the period may be defined as that in which men ceased to write for students, and had not begun to write for women. In the present day no one can take up any book intended for general circulation, without clearly seeing that the writer supposes most of his readers will be ladies or young men; and he, in proportion to his judgment, attends to their taste accordingly. Two or three hundred years ago books were written for professed and systematic students,—the class the fellows of colleges were designed to be, who used to go on studying them all their lives. Between these two, there was a time in which the more marked class of literary consumers were strong-headed practical men. Education had not become so general, or so feminine, as to make the present style—what is called the "brilliant style"—at all necessary; but there was enough culture to make the demand of common diffused persons more effectual than that of special and secluded scholars. A book-buying public had arisen of sensible men, who would not endure the awful folio style in which the schoolmen wrote. From peculiar causes, too, the business of that age was perhaps more free from the hurry and distraction which disable so many of our practical men at the present time from reading. You accordingly see in the books of the last century what is called a masculine tone; a firm, strong, perspicuous narration of matter of fact, a plain argument, a contempt for every thing which distinct definite people cannot entirely and thoroughly comprehend. There is no more solid book in the world than Gibbon's history. Only consider the chronology. It begins before the year ONE and goes down to the year 1453, and is a schedule or series of schedules of important events during that time. Scarcely any fact deeply affecting European civilisation is wholly passed over, and the great majority are elaborately recounted. Laws,

dynasties, churches, barbarians, appear and disappear. Every thing changes; the old world—the classical civilisation of form and definition—passes away, a new world of free spirit and inward growth emerges; between the two lie a mixed weltering interval of trouble and confusion, when every body hates every body, and the historical student leads a life of skirmishes, is oppressed with broils and feuds. All through this long period Gibbon's history goes with steady consistent pace; like a Roman legion through a troubled country—*hæret pede pes*; up hill and down hill, through marsh and thicket, through Goth or Parthian—the firm defined array passes forward—a type of order and an emblem of civilisation. Whatever may be the defects of Gibbon's history, none can deny him a proud precision and a style in marching order.

Another characteristic of the eighteenth century is its taste for dignified pageantry. What an existence was that of Versailles! How gravely admirable to see the *grand monarque* shaved, and dressed, and powdered; to look on and watch a great man carefully amusing himself with dreary trifles. Or do we not even now possess an invention of that age—the great eighteenth-century footman, still in the costume of his era, with dignity and powder, vast calves and noble mien? What a world it must have been when all men looked like that! Go and gaze with rapture at the footboard of a carriage, and say, Who would not obey a premier with such an air? Grave, tranquil, decorous pageantry is a part, as it were, of the essence of the last age. There is nothing more characteristic of Gibbon. A kind of pomp pervades him. He is never out of livery. He ever selects for narration those themes which look most like a levee: grave chamberlains seem to stand throughout; life is a vast ceremony, the historian at once the dignitary and the scribe.

The very language of Gibbon shows these qualities. Its majestic march has been the admiration—its rather pompous cadence the sport of all perusers. It has the greatest merit of an historical style; it is always going on; you feel no doubt of its continuing in motion. Many narrators of the reflective class, Sir Archibald Alison for example, fail in this; your constant feeling is, "Ah! he is pulled up; he is going to be profound; he never will go on again." But at the same time, the manner of the Decline and Fall is about the last which should be recommended for strict imitation. It is not a style in which you can tell the truth. A monotonous writer is suited only to monotonous matter. Truth is of various kinds—grave, solemn, dignified, petty, low, ordinary; and a historian who has to tell the truth must be able to tell what is vulgar as well as what is great, what is little as well as what is amazing. Gibbon is at fault here. He *cannot* mention

Asia Minor. The petty order of sublunary matters; the common gross existence of ordinary people; the necessary little-nesses of necessary life, are little suited to his sublime narrative. Men on the *Times* feel this acutely; it is most difficult at first to say many things in the huge imperial manner. And after all you cannot tell every thing. "How, sir," asked a reviewer of Sydney Smith's life, "do you say a 'good fellow' in print?" "Mr.——," replied the editor, "you should not say it at all." Gibbon was aware of this rule: he omits what does not suit him; and the consequence is, that though he has selected the most various of historical topics, he scarcely gives you an idea of variety. The ages change, but the varnish of the narration is the same.

It is not unconnected with this fault that Gibbon gives us but an indifferent description of individual character. People seem a good deal alike. The cautious scepticism of his cold intellect, which disinclined him to every extreme, depreciates great virtues and extenuates great vices; and we are left with a tame neutral character, capable of nothing extraordinary,—hateful, as the saying is, "both to God and to the enemies of God."

A great point in favour of Gibbon is the existence of his history. Some great historians seem likely to fail here. A good judge was asked which he preferred, Macaulay's *History of England* or Lord Mahon's. "Why," he replied, "you observe Lord Mahon has written his history; and by what I see Macaulay's will be written not only for but *among* posterity." Practical people have little idea of the practical ability required to write a large book, and especially a large history. Long before you get to the pen, there is an immensity of pure business; heaps of material are strewn every where; but they lie in disorder, unread, uncatalogued, unknown. It seems a dreary waste of life to be analysing, indexing, extracting works and passages, in which one per cent of the contents are interesting, and not half of that per centage will ultimately appear in the flowing narrative. As an accountant takes up a bankrupt's books filled with confused statements of ephemeral events, the disorderly record of unprofitable speculations, and charges this to that head, and that to this,—estimates earnings, specifies expenses, demonstrates failures; so the great narrator, going over the scattered annalists of extinct ages, groups and divides, notes and combines, until from a crude mass of darkened fragments there emerges a clear narrative, a concise account of the result and upshot of the whole. In this art Gibbon was a master. The laborious research of German scholarship, the keen eye of theological zeal, a steady criticism of eighty years, have found few faults of detail. The account has been worked right, the proper authorities consulted,

an accurate judgment formed, the most telling incidents selected. Perhaps experience shows that there is something English in this talent. The Germans are more elaborate in single monographs; but they seem to want the business-ability to work out a complicated narrative, to combine a long whole. The French are neat enough, and the style is very quick; but then it is difficult to believe the facts; the account on its face seems too plain, and no true Parisian ever was an antiquary. The great classical histories published in this country in our own time show that the talent is by no means extinct; and they likewise show, what is also evident, that this kind of composition is easier with respect to ancient than with respect to modern times. The barbarians burned the books; and though all the historians abuse them for it, it is quite evident that in their hearts they are greatly rejoiced. If the books had existed, they would have had to read them. Mr. Macaulay has to peruse every book printed with long f's; and it is no use after all; somebody will find some stupid ms., an old account-book of an "ingenious gentleman," and with five entries therein destroy a whole hypothesis. But Gibbon was exempt from this; he could count the books the splendid Goths bequeathed; and when he had mastered them he might pause. Still it is no light matter, as any one who looks at the books—awful folios in the grave Bodleian—will most certainly credit and believe. And he did it all himself; he never showed his book to any friend, or asked any one to help him in the accumulating work, not even in the correction of the press. "Not a sheet," he says, "has been seen by any human eyes, excepting those of the author and printer; the faults and the merits are exclusively my own." And he wrote most of it with one pen, which must certainly have grown erudite towards the end.

The nature of his authorities clearly shows what the nature of Gibbon's work is. History may be roughly divided into universal and particular; the first being the narrative of events affecting the whole human race, at least the main historical nations, the narrative of whose fortunes is the story of civilisation; and the latter being the relation of events relating to one or a few particular nations only. Universal history, it is evident, comprises great areas of space and long periods of time; you cannot have a series of events visibly operating on all great nations without time for their gradual operation, and without tracking them in succession through the various regions of their power. There is no instantaneous transmission in historical causation; a long interval is required for universal effects. It follows, that universal history necessarily partakes of the character of a summary. You cannot recount the cumbrous annals

of long epochs without condensation, selection, and omission; the narrative, when shortened within the needful limits, becomes concise and general. What it gains in time, according to the mechanical phrase, it loses in power. The particular history, confined within narrow limits, can show us the whole contents of these limits, explain its features of human interest, recount in graphic detail all its interesting transactions, touch the human heart with the power of passion, instruct the mind with patient instances of accurate wisdom. The universal is confined to a dry enumeration of superficial transactions; no action can have all its details; the canvas is so crowded that no figure has room to display itself effectively. From the nature of the subject, Gibbon's history is of the latter class; the sweep of the narrative is so wide; the decline and fall of the Roman empire being in some sense the most universal event which has ever happened,—being, that is, the historical incident which has most affected all civilised men, and the very existence and form of civilisation itself,—it is evident that we must look rather for a comprehensive generality than a telling minuteness of delineation. The history of a thousand years does not admit the pictorial detail which a Scott or a Macaulay can accumulate on the history of a hundred. Gibbon has done his best to avoid the dryness natural to such an attempt. He inserts as much detail as his limits will permit; selects for more full description striking people and striking transactions; brings together at a single view all that relates to single topics; above all, by a regular advance of narration, never ceases to imply the regular progress of events and the steady course of time. None can deny the magnitude of such an effort. After all, however, these are merits of what is technically termed composition, and are analogous to those excellencies in painting or sculpture that are more respected by artists than appreciated by the public at large. The fame of Gibbon is highest among writers; those especially who have studied for years particular periods included in his theme (and how many those are; for in the East and West he has set his mark on all that is great for ten centuries!) acutely feel and admiringly observe how difficult it would be to say so much, and leave so little untouched; to compress so many telling points; to present in so few words so apt and embracing a narrative of the whole. But the mere unsophisticated reader scarcely appreciates this; he is rather awed than delighted; or rather, perhaps, he appreciates it for a little while, then is tired by the roll and glare; then on any chance—the creaking of an organ, or the stirring of a mouse—in time of temptation he falls away. It has been said, the way to answer all objections to Milton is to take down the book and read him; the way to reverence Gibbon

is not to read him at all, but look at him, from outside, in the bookcase, and think how much there is inside; what a course of events, what a muster-roll of names, what a steady solemn sound! You will not like to take the book down; but you will think how much you could be delighted if you would.

It may be well, though it can be only in the most cursory manner, to examine the respective treatment of the various elements in this vast whole. The history of the Decline and Fall may be roughly and imperfectly divided into the picture of the Roman empire—the narrative of barbarian incursions—the story of Constantinople: and some few words may be hastily said on each.

The picture,—for so, from its apparent stability when contrasted with the fluctuating character of the later period, we may call it,—which Gibbon has drawn of the united empire has immense merit. The organisation of the imperial system is admirably dwelt on; the manner in which the old republican institutions were apparently retained, but really altered, is compendiously explained; the mode in which the imperial will was transmitted to and carried out in remote provinces is distinctly displayed. But though the mechanism is admirably delineated, the dynamical principle, the original impulse, is not made clear. You never feel you are reading about the Romans. Yet no one denies their character to be most marked. Poets and orators have striven for the expression of it:

“Leave gold and myrrh and jewels,
Rich table and soft bed,
To them who of man’s seed are born,
Whom woman’s milk hath fed.
Thou wast not made for lucre,
For pleasure, nor for rest,—
Thou that art sprung from the War-god’s loins,
And hast tugged at the she-wolf’s breast.

* * * * *

Thy nurse will bear no master,
Thy nurse will bear no load;
And woe to them that shear her,
And woe to them that goad.

* * * * *

And such as is the War-god,
The author of thy line,
And such as she who suckled thee,
Even such be thou and thine.”

What a refreshment from the cold serenity of the Decline and Fall, where every man seems a statue, and every institution a formula! Mr. Macaulay has been similarly criticised; it has

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been said, that notwithstanding his great dramatic power, and wonderful felicity in the selection of events on which to exert it, he yet never makes us feel that we are reading about Englishmen. The coarse clay of our English nature *cannot* be represented in so fine a style. In the same way, and to a much greater extent (for this is perhaps an unthankful criticism, if we compare Macaulay's description of any body with that of any other historian), Gibbon is chargeable with neither expressing nor feeling the essence of the people concerning whom he is writing. There was, in truth, in the Roman people a warlike fanaticism, a puritanical essence, an interior, latent, restrained, enthusiastic religion, which was utterly alien to the cold scepticism of the narrator. Of course he was conscious of it. He indistinctly felt that at least there was something he did not like; but he could not realise or sympathise with it without a change of heart and nature. The old Pagan has a sympathy with the religion of enthusiasm far above the reach of the modern Epicurean.

It may indeed be said, on behalf of Gibbon, that the old Roman character was in its decay, and that only so slight traces of it were remaining in the age of Augustus and the Antonines that it is no particular defect in him to leave it unnoticed. Yet though the intensity of its nobler peculiarities was on the wane, many a vestige would perhaps have been apparent to so learned an eye, if his temperament and disposition had been prone to seize upon and search for them. Nor is there any adequate appreciation of the compensating element, of the force which really held society together, of the fresh air of the Illyrian hills, of that army which, evermore recruited from northern and rugged populations, doubtless brought into the very centre of a degraded society the healthy simplicity of a vital if barbarous religion.

It is no wonder that such a mind should have looked with displeasure on primitive Christianity. The whole of his treatment of that topic has been discussed by many pens, and three generations of ecclesiastical scholars have illustrated it with their emendations. Yet if we turn over this, the latest and most elaborate edition, containing all the important criticisms of Milman and of Guizot, we shall be surprised to find how few instances of definite exact error such a scrutiny has been able to find out. As Paley, with his strong sagacity, at once remarked, the subtle error rather lies hid in the sinuous folds than is directly apparent on the surface of the polished style. Who, said the shrewd archdeacon, can refute a sneer? And yet even this is scarcely the exact truth. The objection of Gibbon is, in fact, an objection rather to religion than to Christianity; as has been said, he did not appreciate, and could not describe, the most

inward form of pagan piety; he objected to Christianity because it was the intensest of religions. We do not mean by this to charge Gibbon with any denial, any overt distinct disbelief in the existence of a supernatural Being. This would be very unjust; his cold composed mind had nothing in common with the Jacobinical outbreak of the next generation. He was no doubt a theist after the fashion of natural theology; nor was he devoid of more than scientific feeling; all constituted authorities struck him with emotion, all ancient ones with awe. If the Roman empire had descended to his time, how much he would have revered it! He had doubtless a great respect for the "First Cause;" it had all the titles to approbation; "it was not conspicuous," he would have said, "but it was potent." A sensitive decorum revolted from the jar of atheistic disputation. We have already described him *ad nauseam*. A sensible middle age in political life; a bachelor, not himself gay, but living with gay men; equable and secular; as Porson said, "never failing in natural feeling except when women were to be ravished and Christians to be martyred." His writings are in character. The essence of the far-famed fifteenth and sixteenth chapters is, in truth, but a description of unworldly events in the tone of this world, of awful facts in unmoved voice, of truths of the heart in the language of the eyes. The wary sceptic has not even committed himself to definite doubts. These celebrated chapters were in the first manuscript much longer, and were gradually reduced to their present size by excision and compression. Who can doubt that in their first form they were a clear, or comparatively clear expression of exact opinions on the Christian history, and that it was by a subsequent and elaborate process that they were reduced to their present and insidious obscurity. The process has been effectual. "Divest," says Dean Milman of the introduction to the fifteenth chapter, "this whole passage of the latent sarcasm betrayed by the whole of the subsequent dissertation, and it might commence a Christian history, written in the most Christian spirit of candour."

It is not for us here to go into any disquisition as to the comparative influence of the five earthly causes to whose secondary operation the specious historian ascribes the progress of Christianity. Weariness and disinclination forbid. There can be no question that the polity of the church, and the zeal of the converts, and other such things, did most materially conduce to the progress of the Gospel. But few will now attribute to these much of the effect. The real cause is the heaving of the mind after the truth. Troubled with the perplexities of time, weary with the vexation of ages, the spiritual faculty of man turns to the truth as the child turns to its mother. The

thirst of the soul was to be satisfied, the deep torture of the spirit to have rest. There was an appeal to those

“High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised.”

The mind of man has an appetite for the truth.

“Hence, in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,—
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty voices rolling evermore.”

All this was not exactly in Gibbon's way, and he does not seem to have been able to conceive that it was in any one else's. Why his chapters had given offence he could hardly make out. It actually seems that he hardly thought that other people believed more than he did. “We may be well assured,” says he, of a sceptic of antiquity, “that a writer conversant with the world would never have ventured to expose the gods of his country to public ridicule, had they not been already the objects of secret contempt among the polished and enlightened orders of society.” “Had I,” he says of himself, “believed that the majority of English readers were so fondly attached even to the name and shadow, had I foreseen that the pious, the timid, and the prudent would feel, or would affect to feel, with such exquisite sensibility,—I might perhaps have softened the two invidious chapters, which would create many enemies and conciliate few friends.” The state of belief at that time is a very large subject; but it is probable that in the cultivated cosmopolitan classes the continental scepticism was very rife; that among the hard-headed classes the rough spirit of English Deism had made much way. Though the mass of the people doubtless believed much as they now believe, yet it seems that the entire upper class was lazy and corrupt, and that there is truth in the picture of the modern divine: “The thermometer of the Church of England sunk to its lowest point in the first thirty years of the reign of George III. . . . In their preaching, nineteen clergymen out of twenty carefully abstained from dwelling upon Christian doctrines. Such topics exposed the preacher to the charge of fanaticism. Even the calm and sober Crabbe, who certainly never erred from excess of zeal, was stigmatised in those days as a methodist, because he introduced into his sermons the notion of future reward and punishment. An orthodox clergyman (they said) should be content to show his people the worldly advantage of good conduct, and to leave heaven and hell to the ranters. Nor can we wonder that such should have been the notions of country parsons, when, even by

those who passed for the supreme arbiters of orthodoxy and taste, the vapid rhetoric of Blair was thought the highest standard of Christian exhortation." It is among the excuses for Gibbon that he lived in such a world.

There are slight palliations also in the notions then prevalent of the primitive church. There was the Anglican theory, that it was a *via media*, the most correct of periods, that its belief is to be the standard, its institutions the model, its practice the test of subsequent ages. There was the notion, not formally drawn out, but diffused through and implied in a hundred books of evidences,—a notion in opposition to every probability, and utterly at variance with the New Testament,—that the first converts were sober, hard-headed, cultivated inquirers,—Watsons, Paleys, Priestleys, on a small scale; weighing evidence, analysing facts, suggesting doubts, dwelling on distinctions, cold in their dispositions, moderate in their morals, cautious in their creed. We now know that these were not they of whom the world was not worthy. It is now certain that the times of the first church were times of excitement; that great ideas falling on a mingled world were distorted by an untrained intellect, even in the moment in which they were received by a yearning heart; that strange confused beliefs, Millenarianism, Gnosticism, Ebionitism, were accepted, not merely by outlying obscure heretics, but in a measure, half-and-half, one notion more by one man, another more by his neighbour, confusedly and mixedly by the mass of Christians; that the appeal was not to the questioning thinking understanding, but to unheeding all-venturing emotion; to that lower class "from whom faiths ascend," and not to the cultivated and exquisite class by whom they are criticised; that fervid men never embraced a more exclusive creed; in a word, that you can say nothing favourable of the first Christians except that they *were* Christians. There is no "form nor comeliness" in them; no intellectual accomplishments, no caution in action, no discretion in understanding; there is no admirable quality except that, with whatever distortion, or confusion, or singularity, they at once accepted the great clear outline of belief in which to this day we live, move, and have our being. The offence of Gibbon is his disinclination to this simple essence; his excuse, the historical errors then prevalent as to the primitive Christians, the real defects so natural in their position, the false merits ascribed to them by writers who from one reason or another desired to treat them as "an authority."*

* Compare the description of a felicitous and admirable writer. "When we consider what is implied in such expressions as 'not many wise, not many learned were called' to the knowledge of the truth, we can scarcely avoid feeling that there must have been much in the early church which would have been distasteful

On the whole, therefore, it may be said of the first, and in some sense the most important part of Gibbon's work, that though he has given an elaborate outline of the framework of society, and described its detail with pomp and accuracy, yet that he has not comprehended or delineated its nobler essence, Pagan or Christian. Nor perhaps was it to be expected that he should, for he inadequately comprehended the dangers of the time; he thought it the happiest period the world has ever known; he would not have comprehended the remark, "To see the old world in its worst estate we turn to the age of the satirists and of Tacitus, when all the different streams of evil coming from east, west, north, south, the vices of barbarism and the vices of civilisation, remnants of ancient cults and the latest refinements of luxury and impurity, met and mingled on the banks of the Tiber. What could have been the state of society when Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Domitian, Heliogabalus, were the rulers of the world? To a good man we should imagine that death itself would be more tolerable than the sight of such things coming upon the earth." So deep an ethical sensibility was not to be expected in the first century; nor is it strange when, after seventeen hundred years, we do not find it in their historian.

Space has failed us, and we must be unmeaningly brief. The

to us as men of education, much that must have worn the appearance of excitement and enthusiasm. Is the mean conventicle, looking almost like a private house, more like that first assembly of Christians in the large upper room, or the Catholic church, arrayed in all the glories of Christian art? Neither of them is altogether like in spirit, perhaps; but in externals the first. Is the dignified hierarchy that occupy the seats around the altar more like the multitude of first believers, or the lowly crowd that kneel upon the pavement? If we try to embody in the mind's eye the forms of the first teachers, and still more of their followers, we cannot help reading the true lesson, however great may be the illusions of poetry and art. Not St. Paul standing on Mars' Hill in the fulness of manly strength, as we have him in the cartoon of Raphael, is the true image, but such a one as he himself would glory in, whose bodily presence was weak and speech feeble, who had an infirmity in his flesh, and bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. And when we look at this picture full in the face, however we might by nature be inclined to turn aside from it, or veil its details in general language, we cannot deny that many things that accompany the religion of the uneducated now must also have accompanied the Gospel preached to the poor. There must have been, humanly speaking, spiritual delusions, where men lived so exclusively in the spiritual world; there were scenes which we know took place, such as St. Paul says would make the unbeliever think that they were mad. The best and holiest persons among the poor and ignorant are not entirely free from superstition according to the notions of the educated; at best they are apt to speak of religion in a manner not suited to our taste; they sing with a loud excited voice, they imagine themselves to receive divine oracles even about the humblest cares of life. Is not this, in externals at least, very like the appearance which the disciples must have presented who obeyed the apostle's injunction: 'Is any sad? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms?' Could our nerves have borne to witness 'the speaking with tongues,' or 'the administration of baptism,' or 'the love-feasts' as they probably existed in the early church?"—*Jowett, Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. ii. p. 199.

second head of Gibbon's history—the narrative of the barbarian invasions—has been recently criticised, on the ground that he scarcely enough explains the gradual but unceasing and inevitable manner in which the outer barbarians were affected by and assimilated to the civilisation of Rome. Mr. Congreve has well observed, that the impression which Gibbon's narrative is insensibly calculated to convey is, that there was little or no change in the state of the Germanic tribes between the time of Tacitus and the final invasion of the empire—a conclusion which is obviously incredible. To the general reader there will perhaps seem some indistinctness in this part of the work, nor is a free confused barbarism a congenial subject for an imposing and orderly pencil. He succeeds better in the delineation of the riding monarchies, if we may so term them, of the equestrian courts of Attila or Timour, in which the great scale, the concentrated power, the very enormity of the barbarism, give, so to speak, a shape to unshapeliness; impart, that is, a horrid dignity to horse-flesh and mare's milk, an imposing oneness to the vast materials of a crude barbarity. It is needless to say that no one would search Gibbon for an explanation of the reasons or feelings by which the northern tribes were induced to accept Christianity.

It is on the story of Constantinople that the popularity of Gibbon rests. The vast extent of the topic; the many splendid episodes it contains; its epic unity from the moment of its far-seeing selection by Constantine to its last fall; its position as the link between Europe and Asia; its continuous history; the knowledge that through all that time it was, as now, a diadem by the water-side, a lure to be snatched by the wistful barbarian, a marvel to the West, a prize for the North and for the East;—these, and such as these ideas, are congenial advantages to a style of pomp and grandeur. The East seems to require to be treated with a magnificence unsuitable to a colder soil. The nature of the events, too, is suitable to Gibbon's cursory imposing manner. It is the history of a form of civilisation, but without the power thereof; a show of splendour and vigour, but without bold life or interior reality. What an opportunity for an historian who loved the imposing pageantry and disliked the purer essence of existence! There were here neither bluff barbarians nor simple saints; there was nothing admitting of particular accumulated detail: we do not wish to know the interior of the stage; the imposing movements are all which should be seized. Some of the features are curious in relation to those of the historian's life; the clear accounts of the theological controversies, followed out with an appreciative minuteness so rare in a sceptic, are not disconnected with his early conversion to the scholastic church.

The brilliancy of the narrative reminds us of his enthusiasm for Arabic and the East; the minute description of a licentious epoch evinces the habit of a mind which, not being bold enough for the practice of license, took a pleasure in following its theory. There is no subject which combines so much of unity with so much of variety.

It is evident, therefore, where Gibbon's rank as an historian must finally stand. He cannot be numbered among the great painters of human nature, for he has no sympathy with the heart and passions of our race; he has no place among the felicitous describers of detailed life, for his subject was too vast for minute painting, and his style too uniform for a shifting scene. But he is entitled to a high—perhaps to a first place—among the orderly narrators of great events; the composed expositors of universal history; the tranquil artists who have endeavoured to diffuse a cold polish over the warm passions and desultory fortunes of mankind.

The life of Gibbon after the publication of his great work was not very complicated. During its composition he had withdrawn from Parliament and London to the studious retirement of Lausanne. Much eloquence has been expended on this voluntary exile, and it has been ascribed to the best and most profound motives. It is indeed certain that he liked a lettered solitude, preferred easy continental society, was not quite insensible to the charm of scenery, had a pleasure in returning to the haunts of his youth. Prosaic and pure history, however, must explain that he went abroad to *save*. Lord North had gone out of power. Mr. Burke, the Cobden of that era, had procured the abolition of the Lords of Trade; the private income of Gibbon was not equal to his notion of a bachelor London life. The same sum was, however, a fortune at Lausanne. Most things, he acknowledged, were as dear; but then he had not to buy so many things. Eight hundred a year placed him high in the social scale of the place. The inhabitants were gratified that a man of European reputation had selected their out-of-the-way town for the shrine of his time: he lived pleasantly and easily among easy pleasant people; a gentle hum of local admiration gradually arose, which yet lingers on the lips of erudite *laquais de place*. He still retains a fame unaccorded to any other historian; they speak of the "hôtel Gibbon:" there never was even an *estaminet* Tacitus, or a *café* Thucydides.

This agreeable scene, like many other agreeable scenes, was broken by a great thunderclap. The French revolution has disgusted many people; but perhaps it has never disgusted any one more than Gibbon. He had swept and garnished every thing about him. Externally he had made a neat little hermit-

age in a gentle social place ; internally he had polished up a cold theory of life, sufficient for the guidance of a cold and polished man. Every thing seemed to be tranquil with him : the rigid must admit his decorum ; the lax would not accuse him of rigour : he was of the world, and an elegant society naturally loved its own. On a sudden the hermitage was disturbed. No place was too calm for that excitement : scarcely any too distant for that uproar. The French war was a war of opinion, entering households, disturbing villages, dividing quiet friends. The Swiss took some of the infection. There was a not unnatural discord between the people of the Pays de Vaud and their masters the people of Berne. The letters of Gibbon are filled with invectives on the "Gallic barbarians" and panegyrics on Mr. Burke : military details, too, begin to abound—the peace of his retirement was at an end. It was an additional aggravation that the Parisians should do such things. It would not have seemed unnatural that northern barbarians—English, or other uncivilised nations—should break forth in rough riot or cruel license ; but that the people of the most civilised of all capitals, speaking the sole dialect of polished life, enlightened with all the enlightenment then known, should be guilty of excesses unparalleled, unwitnessed, unheard of, was a vexing trial to one who had admired them for many years. The internal creed and belief of Gibbon was as much attacked by all this as were his external circumstances. He had spent his time, his life, his energy, in putting a polished gloss on human tumult, a sneering gloss on human piety ; on a sudden human passion broke forth—the cold and polished world seemed to meet its end ; the thin superficies of civilisation was torn asunder ; the fountains of the great deep seemed opened ; impiety to meet its end ; the foundations of the earth were out of course. We now, after long familiarity and in much ignorance, can hardly read the history of those years without horror ; what an effect must they have produced on those whose minds were fresh, and who knew the people killed ! "Never," he writes to an English nobleman, "did a revolution affect to such a degree the private existence of such numbers of the first people of a great country ; your examples of misery I could easily match with similar examples in this country and neighbourhood, and our sympathy is the deeper, as we do not possess, like you, the means of alleviating in some measure the misfortunes of the fugitives." It violently affected his views of English politics : he had a tendency, in consideration of his cosmopolitan cultivation, to treat them as local littlenesses, parish squabbles ; but now his interest was keen and eager. "But," he says, "in this rage against slavery, in the numerous petitions against the slave-trade, was there no leaven of new democratical

principles? no wild ideas of the rights and natural equality of man? It is these I fear. Some articles in newspapers, some pamphlets of the year, the Jockey Club, have fallen into my hands. I do not infer much from such publications; yet I have never known them of so black and malignant a cast. I shuddered at Grey's motion; disliked the half-support of Fox, admired the firmness of Pitt's declaration, and excused the usual intemperance of Burke. Surely such men as —, —, —, have talents for mischief. I see a club of reform which contains some respectable names. Inform me of the professions, the principles, the plans, the resources of these reformers. Will they heat the minds of the people? Does the French democracy gain no ground? Will the bulk of your party stand firm to their own interest and that of their country? Will you not take some active measures to declare your sound opinions, and separate yourselves from your rotten members? If you allow them to perplex government, if you trifle with this solemn business, if you do not resist the spirit of innovation in the first attempt, if you admit the smallest and most specious change in our parliamentary system, you are lost. You will be driven from one step to another; from principles just in theory to consequences most pernicious in practice; and your first concessions will be productive of every subsequent mischief, for which you will be answerable to your country and to posterity. Do not suffer yourselves to be lulled into a false security; remember the proud fabric of the French monarchy. Not four years ago it stood founded, as it might seem, on the rock of time, force, and opinion; supported by the triple aristocracy of the church, the nobility, and the parliaments. They are crumbled into dust: they are vanished from the earth. If this tremendous warning has no effect on the men of property in England; if it does not open every eye, and raise every arm,—you will deserve your fate. If I am too precipitate, enlighten; if I am too desponding, encourage me. My pen has run into this argument; for, as much a foreigner as you think me, on this momentous subject I feel myself an Englishman."

The truth clearly is, that he had arrived at the conclusion that he was the sort of person a populace kill. People wonder a great deal why very many of the victims of the French revolution were particularly selected; the Marquis de Custine, especially, cannot divine why they executed *his* father. The historians cannot show that they committed any particular crimes; the marquises and marchionesses seem very inoffensive. The fact evidently is, that they were killed for being polite. The world felt itself unworthy of it. There were so many bows, such regular smiles, such calm superior condescension,—could a mob

be asked to stand it? Have we not all known a precise, formal, patronising old gentleman — bland, imposing, something like Gibbon? have we not suffered from his dignified attentions? If *we* had been on the Committee of Public Safety, can we doubt what would have been the fate of that man? Just so wrath and envy destroyed in France an upper-class world.

After his return to England, Gibbon did not do much or live long. He completed his *Memoirs*, the most imposing of domestic narratives, the model of dignified detail. As we said before, if the Roman empire *had* written about itself, this was how it would have done so. He planned some other works, but executed none; judiciously observing that building castles in the air was more agreeable than building them on the ground. His career was, however, drawing to an end. Earthly dignity has its limits, even the dignity of an historian. He had long been stout; and now symptoms of dropsy began to appear. After a short interval, he died on the 16th of January 1794. We have sketched his character, and have no more to say. After all, what is our criticism worth? It only fulfils his aspiration, "that a hundred years hence I may still continue to be abused."

ART. II.—THE SPANISH CONQUEST IN AMERICA.

The Spanish Conquest in America, and its relation to the History of Slavery and to the Government of Colonies. By Arthur Helps. With Maps. Vols. I. and II. London, John W. Parker. 1855.

It needs a slight acquaintance only with our recent historians to discover, that whether they excel or are inferior to their predecessors in the last century, they differ from them in the conception of their office and the character of their researches. When Hume and Robertson claimed for themselves the merit of having raised new altars to the muse of British history, they grounded their pretensions, which are not unfounded, upon the fact, that they had retrenched the somewhat cumbrous grandeur of Bacon and Knollys, of Raleigh and Clarendon, and modelled their narratives upon the rules obeyed by Tacitus and Livy. There was, indeed, some unconscious deception in this assumption; they imagined themselves to have returned to the standards of the ancients, but their actual prototypes were Montesquieu and Voltaire. Like these admirable writers, the best English historians of the eighteenth century aimed, in the first place, at perspicuity of style and arrangement; in the next, at pictorial grouping; and lastly, at conveying to their readers as much in-

formation as was consistent with their theory of the narrative art. But in order to attain the simplicity and smoothness of their models, it was necessary to reject many subjects which the recent historian includes in his story as indispensable to his delineations of an age or a people. At social problems they could barely afford to hint, and relinquished them to the ethical speculator; the dry details of finance were either wholly passed over, or relegated to an appendix; the domestic life and manners of a nation were consigned to the antiquary; and art, science, and literature, were glanced at in the briefest of summaries. They succeeded in what they proposed to themselves—their pictures are deftly foreshortened and delicately coloured; and if history has since enlarged its domain, and multiplied its duties, the classical concinnity of the historians of Charles V. and the Stuarts is hitherto unrivalled, and will probably never be surpassed.

Its eminence, indeed, will perhaps never be directly assailed, since the ambition of historians has taken quite another direction. In the eighteenth century the best narrators aspired to be as clear and sparkling as their French exemplars; in the present we propose to ourselves instead the exhaustive method of Ranke and Von Raumer, and are not content with a story unless it contains all that can be said collaterally as well as directly upon a subject. Fortunately, with a few exceptions, our writers have not thought it requisite to emulate their Teutonic brethren in the art of packing into a sentence whatsoever may in any way be thrust into it—condition, qualification, exception, and inference; but in all other respects they seem to regard their narratives as a proper receptacle of the *omne scibile*. Mr. Macaulay is as much a historian of the manners and customs of the English as of the intrigues of courts or the proceedings of parliaments; Sir Archibald Alison deluges the reader on the one hand with financial returns, and on the other with geographical descriptions; and Mr. Grote has written a history of the religion and philosophy as well as of the civil and military affairs of the Greeks. The cause of truth, or at least of information, is perhaps better served by this wholesale mode of dealing with history, than it was by the select and separate sketches of the last century. But the task and responsibility of the historian are immeasurably increased. He has ceased to be an essayist, and has become, and is expected to be, an encyclopædist.

Fortunate, accordingly, is the writer whose story, being episodic in its character, admits of isolation without injury to its completeness, and who can pour the full stream of his knowledge into certain limited and shapely reservoirs. The history of the conquest of Spanish America is one of these felicitous themes.

It does not form part and parcel of the universal history of Europe, and yet is connected with it by a few filaments sufficiently strong to invest the subjugation and colonisation of the New World with European interest. Its area is limited; for so soon as the red man and his empires have finally yielded to the invader, the catastrophe is reached, and the fortunes of the various colonies alone afford any topic of interest. The movement of the drama is rapid: but it does not pass beyond the fifth act; nor is its proper *peripeteia*, as is so often the case with the convulsions of the Old World, only the commencement of a new series of changes and intrigues.

We would not, however, undervalue the real difficulties which are inherent in his subject, and with which Mr. Helps has so successfully grappled. The ease, or rather the natural limitations of his subject, affect his work as a whole, but not its component portions. The conquest of America was the work of so many separate adventurers; and, although springing from one centre, its radii are so numerous, the geographical area is so wide, and the character of the conquered nations so diversified, that it demands no ordinary skill to portray them without confusion, or to afford each scene its proper time and place, without incurring a risk of wearying the reader. And this perhaps is among the least of the difficulties which Mr. Helps has encountered. No one who has read his essays attentively can fail to have perceived that he is richly endowed with that analytic function which readily extracts order from apparent confusion, and amid an undigested mass of materials detects those alone of which the architect has actually need. It was to be expected, therefore, that his narrative, however complicate in its movements, would be lucid in its course, and that the discriminative essayist would possess in large measure the ordonnance of the historian.

The difficulties of his task are of different kind, and arise from two principal sources; in the first place from a certain imperfection in his materials, and in the next from his inevitable repetition of an oft-told tale. It will be the object of the following brief analysis of the volumes before us to show that he has overcome both these disadvantages satisfactorily; the one by the extent of his researches, the other by occupying a new point of view in his narrative, both as regards its scope and its illustrations.

The Spaniards themselves are the principal narrators of the conquest of America; and whether we consider that the same hand which guided the pen held also the sword, or the prejudices with which as an invading race they beheld their subjects, or as devout Catholics the abominations of paganism, it is not to be expected that they would afford any very full or direct in-

formation respecting the natives of the New World. This their ignorance and their pride alike forbade. As regards the historian, the Spanish writers on this theme are in the position of reluctant witnesses, requiring no ordinary force of cross-examination. Of their own hardships and heroism, of their hunger and thirst and nakedness, in the illimitable forest and the dismal swamp, how ten put a thousand to flight, how often the saints aided them in their strife with the heathen and the elements, even in the very valley of the shadow of death, they speak willingly enough, and not without such pomp and bravery of words as became the hidalgos of Castile. Equally diffuse are they respecting the cowardice and treachery of the Indians, their indolence and evil heart of unbelief, their apathy towards the preachers of the Catholic faith, their contempt of the saints and the Virgin, their unclean ritual, and their ignorance of the laws and usages of civilised men. Neither are they silent touching the signs and wonders which they beheld; the strange aspect of the planets, the fruits, the animals, the cities, the temples; the great arterial rivers, in comparison with which the Tagus and Guadalquivir were but as trenches that gird an olive-yard; the everlasting mountains, beside which their sierras were as mole-hills; or the sheeted lakes, in comparison with which the inundations of the Ebro, "when the sun rides in Taurus" melting the Cantabrian snows, were but a mill-pool. Of all these marvels they speak sufficiently at times; for the Spaniards of that day were not an inapprehensive race, and often write as men awed by the mystery and the majesty around them. But, as will be seen presently, what regards the conquered rather than what affected the conqueror is the object of Mr. Helps's researches; and of this the reapers of the harvest left but scanty gleanings here and there. Luckily for the historian and ourselves, the moral and social phenomena of the red man were objects of deep interest to their earliest and most unwearied advocate; and the memorials of Las Casas supply some of the information which we seek vainly in the chronicles of Oviedo and Bernal Diaz. Yet the observations of the good clerigo were necessarily confined to a few districts, and principally to the island races. He beheld not, even in spirit,

"Rich Mexico, the seat of Montezume,
And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat
Of Atabalipa, and yet unspoiled
Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons
Call El-dorado."

And when these empires had become Spanish vice-royalties, the documents of their past history were sedulously destroyed, partly because the conquerors were rude men and cared not for them,

and partly because they were, after their manner, religious men, and thought they did God service by destroying all the muni-ments of the synagogue of Satan. Their zeal was ill-directed; the loss is irreparable: yet so our puritan ancestors broke down the carved work of the sanctuary; and scattered to the winds and the rains inexhaustible treasures of learning, in the same spirit which gave to the fire the records of the Aztecs. We may not cast a stone against the Spaniards: they knew not what they did.

The second difficulty is that of repeating, so as to attract the reader, in the first place, and afterwards to win his grace and favour, a thrice-told tale. For, setting aside all intermediate versions of the story of Columbus, Cortes, and Pizarro,—and even such portions of it as have percolated into fiction are no mean disadvantages to the *fourth* historical narrator,—Robertson, Washington Irving, and Prescott are no ordinary "Richmonds in the field." He should be a hardy writer who, with all the means and appliances of recent investigation to boot, would undertake to re-write the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Southey, writing to his friend Beresford respecting his own forthcoming *History of Brazil*, observes, that if Robertson's other histories be no better than his *History of America*, his worth as a chronicler is of the slenderest. This may be so; but it is very difficult, even if it be meet, to demolish an established reputation; and zeal for "very truth" will never eat up the general reader. Mr. Helps's present work, however, does not essentially affect the reputation of any one of these established authors. It regards the subject from an opposite point of view. It is a correlate, not a rival. It deals rather with the issues and the victims of the conquest than with the conquest of America itself. We hear as much of the bondmen as of the bondholders:

"Victrix causa Deis placuit, sed victa Catoni."

Mr. Helps is more on Cato's side than on Cæsar's, as his own words testify. He purposes "to bring before the reader not conquest only, but the results of conquest: the mode of colonial government which ultimately prevailed, the extirpation of native races, the introduction of other races, the growth of slavery, and the settlement of the *encomiendas*, on which all Indian society depended, has been the object of this history."

The conception of his present work, however, had an ethnological basis, which should be kept in mind by the reader.

"Some years ago," Mr. Helps informs us, "being much interested in the general subject of slavery, and engaged in writing upon it, I began to investigate the origin of modern slavery. I soon found that the works commonly referred to gave me no sufficient insight into the matter. Questions, moreover, arose in my mind not immediately con-

nected with slavery, but bearing closely upon it, with respect to the distribution of races in the New World. 'Why,' said I to myself, 'are there none but black men in this island? why are there none but copper-coloured men on that line of coast? how is it that in one town the white population predominates, while in another the aborigines still hold their ground? There must be a series of historical events which, if brought to light, would solve all these questions; and I will endeavour to trace this out for myself.'⁷*

Having thus stated the particular aspect from which Mr. Helps's volumes are to be regarded, and accordingly shown that, in spite of his many precursors, he is not repeating an oft-told tale, we proceed to consider his execution of the task which he has now undertaken. It is not often that a *rifacimento* of a previous work is successful. The bloom of a first conception is apt to pass away; the critical faculty often becomes too potent for the well-being of the conceptive and pictorial powers. Akenside and Tasso marred the freshness of their original poems by recasting them; and we imagine that there are few readers of Clarendon and Johnson who do not regret that the former did not adhere to his intention of composing a biography instead of a history, or that the latter congealed in a stately journal the spirit and familiarity of his *Letters from the Hebrides*. Although, however, the *History of the Spanish Conquest of America* is based upon the well-known *Conquerors of the New World and their Bondsmen*, and is an enlargement of the earlier essay, we have no reason to regret in this instance that the plan has been expanded, and the subject submitted to a complete revision.

So far, indeed, from regretting that Mr. Helps has foregone his earlier undertaking, we are rather disposed to lament that, as regards the form of his present work, he has occasionally retained so many vestiges of that essay. We conceive the functions of the essayist to be essentially distinct from those of the historian. In the one case, it is not only allowable, but also becoming, that the writer should frequently appear in his own person, admit us to the conclave of his own meditations, and discuss, as it were, with his readers such social and ethical questions as may come in his way. But as regards history, it can hardly be, in our opinion, too pictorial and apart from the author himself. In the colouring of his narrative there must always be abundant opportunities for expressing his own sentiments, but the expression should flow naturally from the events recorded and from the characters introduced, and not from the personal interposition of the author him-

* We are not willing to forget the thoughtful essayist in the picturesque historian. Mr. Helps, in a former work, has expressed the same idea more briefly and quaintly; he wishes to show "how the black people came to the New World, how the brown people faded away from certain countries in it, and what part the white people had in these doings."

self as chorus. We do not think, for example, that the pictorial effect of the narrative of the conquest is heightened by the author's informing us that some of it was composed during the troubles of the year 1848. Such intimation of a totally dissimilar crisis strikes us as an anachronism not unlike the presence of a figure essentially modern in a representation of the schools of Athens or the garden of Gethsemane. And much more startling is it to find the writer occasionally acting as interlocutor or eye-witness in a council-chamber three hundred years ago. Mr. Carlyle set this evil precedent in his *Life and Letters of Cromwell*: but his powers of word-painting are so peculiar, that we forgive in him a practice which in any other narrative we must regard as blemishes.

And we are the more inclined to regret in the present instance these occasional departures from the precedents of classical historians, because in the greater portion of his narrative Mr. Helps's diction possesses many of the striking excellencies of historical composition. His language is generally perspicuous and idiomatic, free from all the current tricks and devices of style, free from bravura and epigram, and remarkably pregnant in sense and picturesque in form. In a second edition a very slight amount of excision will render his narrative inferior in vigour and grace to none of modern date, and entitle the accomplished author to rank beside the very foremost of those who, in the present century, have added permanent works to the historical library of England. Our official growl is soon uttered; and while reading the passages which we shall presently bring forward from the volumes before us, the reader may very probably wonder that it should have been uttered at all. A much more difficult task now remains for us, that of conveying to our readers such a general view of the conquest of America as will justly represent the learning, the thoughtfulness, the practical wisdom, and the pictorial beauty of the narrative.

So far as the present volumes extend, the course of events group themselves around three principal figures, Columbus, Las Casas, and Cortes; and around two capital ethnological subjects, the characters of the conquered and their conquerors. Immediately belonging to these, and essentially interwoven with them, are numerous important questions upon colonial government and commerce, opposite aspects of civilisation, the meeting of the two great floods of European and Indian life, and the almost inevitable destiny of certain races of mankind to sink, to die away, to disappear, when brought into contact with stronger forms of social and religious life. Neither is the interest of Mr. Helps's volumes confined to the first encounter between the white and the red man. The Negro race plays no unimportant part in the scene; the discovery of America being fraught with incalculable

misery for those who, drinking the waters of the Niger and the Gambia, seemed to be severed from the interests of Europe by insurmountable barriers of sand, by inhospitable shores, and by the beasts which it is not granted to man to harness to his chariot or to pen within his folds.

One of the most interesting chapters in Mr. Helps's volumes is that in which, under the somewhat quaint title of an "Imaginary Voyage," he has reviewed the aspect of the Indian races as they would have appeared to European eyes a generation before their invasion by the Spaniards. The voyage is imaginary; but the facts from which the review is constructed are collected from the journals of the first explorers with indefatigable pains. Of all the sections of his work, this has probably cost the author the most care and anxiety. He has admitted nothing unwarranted; he has carefully winnowed and sifted his authorities—bushels of chaff often returning to him but a few grains of wheat—and, like a dexterous worker in mosaic, he has set in a new frame, and arranged with rare pictorial skill, whatsoever he found scattered through printed or manuscript documents illustrative of the population, opinions, institutions, and civilisation of the various races of the new continent.

The history of the human race, its derivation, and its migrations, is no longer consigned to the hands of the mere speculator. Buffon and Lord Kaimes would not obtain a hearing at the present time. The questions of race and dispersion have been rescued from their hands by the severe investigations of the philologist and the physiologist. And so far as these fellow-labourers have proceeded hitherto, their conclusions seem to point to an original stock and cradle of the human race; and so far support equally the most ancient of records and of legends. Until better evidence has been adduced than that which satisfied Dr. Knox and some recent inquirers, we shall adhere to the belief that the high lands of Armenia sent forth the first detachment of emigrants to the alluvial plains of Mesopotamia, "to Arachosia and Candaor east," and westward, through the Transcaucasian regions, to the central plateau of Europe between the Balkan and Carpathian Hills. But the very restriction of the area of dispersion, and the implied derivation of mankind from a common stock—the question of a single pair is immaterial—only render more difficult the problem of the population of the new continent. The parentage of America, indeed, has nearly as many claimants as that of the oldest patrician house in Europe. It has been derived from the Phœnicians, whose known but unrecorded voyages seem to give them some title to be regarded as the progenitors of the nations west of the Pillars of Hercules. It has been traced to the dispersed Hebrews, who assuredly, centuries before

their place as a nation was made void, had permeated to nearly every corner of the civilised world, and who were found alike on the banks of the Tagus and of the Amour. But in the strict sense of the word the Jews founded no colonies, since they drifted over the earth, in pursuit of gain or shelter, only as families or individuals. Nor, in spite of some startling religious ideas contained in the creed of the Aztecs, is there any reason or necessity for assuming that the descendants of Abraham ever visited, before the conquest, either the eastern or western flank of the new continent. Mr. Helps indulges in no premature speculations on this question, although he intimates his general agreement with Humboldt and other sound inquirers, that the oceanitic races were probably the first peoplers of America. Even then, however, the curtain of the mystery is scarcely lifted. For, whatever may have been the source of either Mexican or Peruvian civilisation, it is certain, not only that each was of comparatively recent date, and, had we the documents, might probably be brought within chronological limits, but also that the Aztec and Capac dynasties had reared themselves upon nations older and mightier than themselves, and whose antiquity and power are attested by monuments no less striking than the pyramids of the Pharaohs, and by the ruins of cities as expressive of departed might as Thebes, or Babylon, or Hecatompolis.

Mr. Helps "imagines" a voyage undertaken by navigators well qualified to observe and record what they beheld, and sufficiently acquainted with the diversified nations and institutions of Europe in the fifteenth century to comprehend at once the points of resemblance and difference between the old and the new continent. They depart, too, as the real discoverers did after them, deeply imbued with the religious or superstitious prejudices of their age, eager to bring within the pale of the church whatsoever forms of unbelief they might encounter, and disposed to regard all that was not of "the household of faith" as an unclean and abominable thing. In two respects only they differ from the actual explorers; they did not go forth in quest of gold or pearls, nor to render the red man their tributaries and slaves.

To the supposed or the actual discoverers at once presented itself a palpable difference between the inhabitants of the islands which, like so many ante-chambers, stud the eastern coast of America, and the inhabitants of the continent. Various degrees and discrepancies in civilisation were also perceptible in the population of the mainland itself. The seat of the great empires was either, like Mexico, drawn deep within the mainland and radiated towards the sea, or, like Peru, it was seated on the west flank of that gigantic spine of the continent which, even at a distance of 150 miles, casts the shadow of its peaks and ridges upon the

Pacific. At Paria, "the earthly paradise of Columbus," they are greeted for the first time with the aspect of that tropic vegetation that has afforded Humboldt occasion for wedding so much eloquence to so much science.

"By night," says Mr. Helps, "sweet odours, varying with every hour of the watch, were wafted from the shore to the vessel lying near; and the forest-trees, brought together by the serpent-tracery of myriads of strange parasitical plants, might well seem to the fancy like some great design of building, over which the lofty palms, a forest upon a forest, appeared to present a new order of architecture. In the background rose the mist, like incense. These, however, were but the evening fancies of the mariner, who had before him fondly in his mind the wreathed pillars of the cathedral of Burgos, or the thousand-columned Christian mosque of Cordova, or the perfect fane of Seville; and when the moon rose, or the innumerable swarms of luminous insects swept across the picture, it was but a tangled forest after all, wherein the shaping hand of man had made no memorial to his Creator"*

As yet they would discover neither temple nor image, nor any trace of those dark and cruel superstitions which are only less awful because they are less ancient, and have thereby inflicted on mankind fewer centuries of dread and degradation than the dark, cruel, ancestral creeds of central Asia. Occasionally, indeed, grand and elaborate dances of men would be visible through the trees; but whether they were meant to express joy, or sorrow, or devotion, would be moot-points to the mariners. And this absence of visible creed and *cultus* throughout the long and sinuous range of shore from Araya to Darien, would be the more remarkable to men (and it actually moved the first explorers to wonder) accustomed at home to rapid successions of cathedral-towers, and church-spires, and oratories and crosses, to the pomp and circumstance of devotion on nearly every occasion of joy or woe connected with human life, or to those more august commemorations of the church which ranged indifferently from the manger at Bethlehem to the martyrdom of the Saint of Com-

* The supposed and the real "Ophir" of the fifteenth century presented many features in common. The above description may recall to the reader a passage in *Paradise Lost*, composed by a poet who studied voyages and travels with as much zest as he did the Romances of Charlemagne and his Peerage, and the severer fictions of both the Greek and Roman muse.

" — now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
These balmy spoils. As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambique, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabeian odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the blest: with such delay
Well pleased, they slack their course, and many a league,
Cheered with the grateful smell, old ocean smiles."

postella. The natives, however, although their ritual was of the simplest order, knew that there was one God, and offered some sacrifices to him.

But beyond the isthmus, "sailing northward," they came within the verge and ken of a cultus, which would remind the more instructed of what was told in ancient books of the abominations of Egypt and Canaan, and to the ignorant might recall the great square at Seville or Toledo drest for an *auto-da-fé*. "White buildings would be seen among the trees, bearing some likeness to truncated pyramids; and, in the setting sun, dark figures would be seen against the horizon on the tops of these pyramids, from whose gestures it would be sadly and reluctantly admitted by the horror-stricken crew that they were looking upon a human sacrifice."

In the Bay of Honduras another marvel greeted the eyes of the explorers. They had already seen and heard enough to assure them that they were in the neighbourhood of empires as advanced in some elements of civilisation as Castile and Arragon themselves, and occupying a range of territory vaster and more opulent than the dominions of Spain and Portugal and their Neapolitan and African provinces combined. Hard was it to persuade the Spaniard of that age that any monarchy equalled or surpassed his own; that any cities were fairer than Seville, or any plains more teeming and pleasant to the eye than those of Andalusia. But they now discerned that the living empires rested upon the ruins of states "older and mightier than they." For they had now come upon some buried city, buried so long ago, that huge trees had risen among its ruins, and gigantic parasites had twisted their lithe arms around column, and thrown their shoots along peristyles, playing with the strange faces in stone, overshadowing winged symbols of power and sacrificial instruments, and embracing the carved imagery of fruits and flowers their kindred. No living creatures are to be seen there: the burdens of Babylon and Nineveh seem to have been re-acted in the western world; and the explorers, comparing old things with new, and measuring what they saw by the standard of the most Catholic creed, depart awe-struck from these buried mounds, surely believing that these buildings have been sacred to no good purpose, and that the cities have been condemned of God for their inhuman and bloody idolatries. To the real discoverers the spectacle of these desolate places would but confirm their original misconception that they had reached the India of Ptolemy; for the narratives of medieval travellers also told of cities deserted by man and reclaimed by the animals lying in the heart of Asia, the ancient lairs of Nimrod and Belshazzar, or the more recent palaces of "the great kings" of Persia and Parthia.

The march of Cortes across the grand plateau of "New Spain" has been rendered familiar to the reader by the works of Robertson and Prescott. We shall therefore not follow Mr. Helps's imaginary voyage further than may be sufficient to illustrate the social condition of the native races at the time of their conquest. Before, however, we close this chapter of his book, we shall forestall the chronological sequence of the narrative, and introduce in this place a portion of Mr. Helps's description of Mexico. The anachronism will not be excessive, since such as Cortes beheld it from the broad causeway at Iztaparapa, such it would have presented itself to the European eye before the voyage of Columbus.

"Who shall describe Mexico, the Mexico of that age? It ought to be one who had seen all the wonders of the world; and he should have for an audience those who had dwelt in Venice and Constantinople, who had looked down upon Granada from the Alhambra, and who had studied all that remains to be seen of the hundred gates of Thebes, of Babylon, and of Nineveh.

"The especial attributes of the most beautiful cities in the world were here conjoined; and that which was the sole boast of many a world-renowned name formed but one of the charms of this enchantress among cities. Like Granada, encircled but not frowned upon by mountains; fondled and adorned by water, like Venice; as grand in its buildings as Babylon of old; and rich with gardens, like Damascus,—the great city of Mexico was at that time the fairest in the world, and has never since been equalled.

"Neither was hers a beauty, like that of many cities, which gratifies the eye at a distance, but which diminishes at each advancing step of the beholder, until it absolutely degenerates into squalidity. She was beautiful when seen from afar; she still maintained her beauty when narrowly examined by the traveller; she was the city not only of a great king, but of an industrious and thriving people.

"Mexico was situated in a great salt lake communicating with a fresh-water lake. It was approached by three principal causeways of great breadth, constructed of solid masonry two lances in breadth. The length of one of these causeways was two leagues, and that of another a league and a half; and these two ample causeways united in the middle of the city, where stood the great temple. At the ends of these causeways were wooden drawbridges, so that communication could be cut off between the causeways and the town, which would thus become a citadel. There was also an aqueduct which communicated with the mainland, consisting of two separate lines of work in masonry, in order that if one should need repair, the supply of water for the city might not be interrupted.

"The streets were the most various in construction that have ever been seen in any city in the world. Some were of dry land, others wholly of water; and others, again, had pathways of pavement, while

in the centre there was room for boats. The foot-passengers could talk with those in the boats.

"The abodes of the Mexican kings were not like the petty palaces of northern princes. One of the most observant of those Spaniards who first saw these wonders speaks of a palace of Montezuma's in which there was a room where three thousand persons could be well accommodated, and on the terrace-like roof of which a splendid tournament might have been given.

"There was a market-place twice as large as that of the city of Salamanca, surrounded with porticos in which there was room for fifty thousand people to buy and sell.

"The great temple of the city maintained its due proportion of magnificence. In the plan of the city of Mexico, which is to be found in a very early edition of the Letters of Cortes, the space allotted to the temple is twenty times as great as that allotted to the market-place. Indeed, the sacred enclosure was in itself a town; and Cortes, who seldom stops in his terrible narrative to indulge in praise or in needless description, says, that no human tongue could explain the grandeur and the peculiarities of this temple. Cortes uses the word 'temple;' but it might rather be called a sacred city, as it contained many temples, and the abodes of all the priests and virgins who ministered at them, also a university and an arsenal.

"It was enclosed by lofty stone walls, and was entered by four portals, surmounted by fortresses. No less than twenty truncated pyramids, probably cased with porphyry, rose up from within that enclosure. High over them all towered the great temple dedicated to the god of war. This, like the rest, was a truncated pyramid, with ledges round it, and with two small towers upon the highest surface, in which were placed the images of the great god of war (Huitzilopochtli), and of the principal deity of all (Tezcatlipeck), the Mexican Jupiter."

Without inferring from the exterior magnificence or the internal arrangements of Mexico a degree of civilisation corresponding to that of London or Paris, or even Vienna at the present moment, we cannot fail to discern that the Europeans conquered a people in many respects more civilised than themselves. In the Europe of that day it would have been in vain to look for canals or roads like those of the Aztecs; equally vain to have looked for such provisions for the sanitary condition of the inhabitants, or for so efficient a system of police. The mention of a university at Mexico should have elicited some explanation from the historian. We may, however, infer from other portions of his narrative the science and the literature there cultivated. As in Rome before the introduction of Greek literature, the learning of the Mexicans consisted of theology and history. Their ritual was complex, the ranks of the priesthood were numerous, the attributes of the deities were diversified, and there was apparently in their theo-

logical system a mixture of two very opposite creeds,—one of simple nature-worship, in which the sacrifices were the fruits and flowers of the earth; and the other, and doubtless the later in date, the ghastly doctrine of expiation by human victims. The events of war and peace were scrupulously recorded by the Mexican chroniclers, and in a fashion much less rude than that originally employed by the Roman pontiffs, since it argues a more refined taste, and demands greater skill to describe events by symbolic pictures than to drive nails into the wall of a temple. From certain known portions of Aztec divinity we shall probably not err in ascribing to it no small measure of ethical and metaphysical subtlety, at least we may infer that in these respects the Mexican priests were not inferior to the Celtic Druids, who for many ages were ignorant of, or disdained the art of writing. The Mexicans had attained the religious belief or delusion that severance from the common relations of life was an acceptable service to the gods. They had their sacred virgins and their peculiar priesthood, the practices of confession and absolution, their inner mysteries, and the symbolic apparatus which in all ages has been provided by those within the veil for the instruction or bewilderment of those without. Among the most curious pages in Mr. Helps's volumes is that on which he has inscribed the following Mexican forms of prayer and absolution. We could almost suspect that the doctors of the university of Salamanca denounced and demolished the liturgies of the Aztecs out of jealousy, and that the Spanish priesthood were justly alarmed at a system of theology as subtle, but more indulgent to human infirmity than their own.

The first of these prayers was used after auricular confession, which, however, it appears, occurred once only in a lifetime. The Mexican priesthood had still to learn the lesson of converting the remorse and alarm of a sinner into a life-long instrument of torture and influence. It ran thus:

"Our Lord most gracious, the defender and favourer of all: you have just heard the confession of this poor sinner, in which he has made known in your presence his rottenness and filthiness." The confessor then went on to say—it may be remarked, that the priest is the vicarious spokesman here, as in other more religious latitudes—that "the sinner might have concealed some of his sins, in which case dire will be his punishment; but perchance he has spoken the whole truth, and now feels 'doulour and discontent' for all that is past, and firm resolve never to sin more." He then proceeded: "I speak in presence of your majesty who knowest all things, and knowest that this poor wretch did not sin with entire liberty of free will, but was helped and inclined to it by the natural condition of the sign under which he was born. And since it is so, O most gracious Lord, defender and favourer of all men, even if this poor man has grievously offended against you,

peradventure will you not cause your anger and your indignation to depart from him?" Continuing in this strain, the confessor besought pardon and remission of sins, "a thing which descends from heaven as clearest and purest water, with which your majesty washes away and purifies all the stains and filthiness which sins cause in the soul."

What follows is even more curious. For the priest then addressed the penitent, and told him that he had come to a place of much danger and labour and dread, where there is a ravine from which no one who had once fallen in could make his escape; also, he had come to a place where snares and nets are set one with another, and one over against another. All this is said metaphorically of the world and of sin. He then proceeded to speak of the judgment to come in another world, and of the lake of miseries and intolerable torments. "But now, here you are," he said to the penitent; "and the time is arrived in which you have had pity on yourself to speak with our Lord, who sees the secrets of hearts." And he then told the penitent there was a new birth for him, but he "must look to his ways well, and see that he sinned no more." No priest regular or secular could so far have shriven him better; but there follows an ugly blot, forming, in our opinion, no part of the original form of confession; for the penitent, finally, must cleanse his house and himself, and seek a slave to sacrifice before God; and he must work a year or more in the house of God, and undergo penitential exercises, "piercing his tongue for the injurious words it had uttered; and he must give in charity even to the depriving himself of sustenance; for, look," said the priest, speaking of the poor, "their flesh is as thy flesh, and they are men as thou art, especially the sick; for they are the image of God. There is no more to say to thee: go in peace; and I pray God that he may help thee to perform that which thou art bound to do, for he is gracious to all men."

Scarcely less remarkable is the prayer appointed to be said by a Mexican king, or governor, upon his election, wherein a spirit of devotion is singularly blended with a spirit of despotism. After celebrating the greatness of God, it proceeds in a vein of humiliation, saying that he (the king) deserves blindness of his eyes and crushing of his body, that it is he who requires to be governed, and that the Lord must know many to whom he could confide this charge of government; "but since you are determined to put me forward as an object of scandal and laughter for the world, let your will be done." The conclusion, however, is in a higher tone: "Although," he proceeds to say, "I am a poor creature, I wish to say that unworthily I am your image, and represent your person; and the words which I shall speak have to be held as your words, and my countenance to be esteemed as your countenance, and my hearing as your hearing,

and the punishments that I shall ordain have to be considered as if you ordained them; wherefore I pray you, put within me your spirit and your words, that all may obey, and that none may be able to contradict."

Such a prayer, with all its moral grandeur, might have been offered up indifferently by the Commander of the Faithful, prompted by the chief of the Ulemas; by Philip II., at the dictation of his confessor; or by Charles I., with the sanction of Laud. The connection between kingcraft and priestcraft was not confined to the Old World, and is indeed found wherever a theocracy, as in Judæa or Egypt, is the supreme power in the state, or where religion is a state-machine. The barbarian Aztecs were not inferior to the civilised Castilians in cementing the alliance between the worlds temporal and spiritual. In reading of the cruel and gross superstitions of the Mexicans, we are tempted to hail, as Mr. Helps seems to do, the advent of Cortes, as the epoch of deliverance from a creed which, like that of the worshippers of Moloch, offered the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul. It was indeed the dawning of a better day when scenes like the following, so well described by the historian, were no longer enacted in the great city of Anahuac. We again borrow from his "imaginary voyage;" but such a spectacle was actually beheld by Alvarado, whom, from his ruddy complexion, the Mexicans called "Tonatiuh, the sun-faced man," while acting, in the absence of Cortes, as commander of the Spanish garrison in Mexico.

"Once being detained in a dense crowd in the square of the great temple, they became unwilling spectators of a human sacrifice. At first they see six priests, five of them clothed in white, and the sixth or chief priest in red and otherwise richly attired. Inquiring his name, they are answered, Tezcatlipeck, or Huitzilopochtli, and are astonished, knowing these to be the names of Mexican divinities, and not being aware that the chief priest assumed for the day the name of the god who was honoured by the sacrifice."

This identification of the Deity with his priest is a stride beyond the assumption of the successor of St. Peter to be accounted as God's vicegerent on earth. Sometimes, indeed, even a greater mystery was shadowed forth; for on some occasions "the victim also represented the Deity to whom the sacrifice was offered."

"Scanning this group of priests more closely, the Spanish explorers discover that the priests are carrying to the upper area of the temple the body of a naked and living man. The long flights of steps are slowly mounted, and the unfortunate victim placed upon a large, convex, green stone. Four of the attendant priests hold him down by the arms and legs, while a fifth places a wooden instrument, of a serpent form, across his throat. The convex altar raises the body of the victim into an arched shape, and enables the chief priest to make with

more facility the fatal incision, and to remove the heart of the victim. The heart was then presented to the idol, being laid within his uncouth hand, or placed upon his altar.

"It was a beautiful day on which the explorers beheld this scene. The emeralds worn by the chief priest glittered in the sun, and his feathers fluttered lightly with the breeze. The bright pyramidal temples were reflected in the lake, and in a thousand mirrors formed by the enclosed waters in the water-streets. A busy pleasant noise from the adjacent market-place was heard throughout the great square. The victim had uttered no sound. He knew the inutility of any outcry. Priests, victims, and people were alike accustomed to view such ceremonies, and this was one of the ordinary sacrifices. The expression of the faces in the crowd was calm and almost self-satisfied. All around was beautiful and serene; and it was hardly until the mangled body, hurled down from the upper area of the temple, had come near to the feet of the astounded voyagers, that they could believe 'they had really seen what passed before their eyes.'"

In a subsequent chapter Mr. Helps contrasts, though in no spirit of extenuation, the savage sacrifices of Mexico with the savage games of pagan Rome. He supposes an inversion of time and incidents—that Christianity had arisen in the New instead of the Old World; that some Peruvian Columbus had discovered lands east of the Atlantic, and penetrated the great Mediterranean instead of the great Mexican Gulf. Then, in the first centuries of the Christian era, American missionaries might have gazed from the benches of the Coliseum upon combats of men with men between whom no enmity existed, or of men with beasts without the pretext or pleasures of the chase. "These spectators are truly savages," the strangers might have exclaimed; "they butcher one another not for any cause so respectable as superstition, but from a morbid love of amusement. And there are women sitting and applauding amongst them, and with wild outcries urging the populace to refuse the petition of the kneeling gladiator, and giving the sign of murder to the guards of the arena."* The golden palaces, the marble colonnades, the distant capital, and the adjacent pillar of Trajan, rock and reel before their eyes as through a crimson mist, and the envoys depart bewildered by the mingled civilisation and barbarism of imperial Rome.

The parallel, in our opinion, is incomplete, and even unnecessary. We need not resort to imagination or inversion of ages and events to produce a spectacle that shall equal, if it does not transcend, the horrors of an Aztec sacrifice to Tezcatlipeck. Among the caciques who were transported to Spain as tokens and trophies of the conquest, many survived long enough to

* " — et verso pollice vulgi
Quemlibet occidunt populariter."

become familiarised with the sportive or solemn recreations of their Spanish lords. They would behold a bull-fight in the lists at Seville, or an *auto-da-fé* in the great square of Toledo. They would gaze upon an amphitheatre thronged with spectators; sheltered from the Andalusian sun by awnings of silk or the fine linen of Syria; cooled by artificial fountains drawn from the Guadalquivir; refreshed by showers of perfume; leaping, shouting, and applauding, as horse and man rolled down, or as the Biscayan bull fell headlong on the sand soaked and slippery with blood. They would behold a yet ghastlier spectacle, awakening a yet more absorbing interest in the spectators. The king is on his throne; Torquemada sits beside him on the dais; the banners of the Inquisition float beside those of Arragon and Castile; the cathedral has sent its chapter and its choir; the monastery its sable or white-robed brethren; the grandees are surrounded by their suite; the beauty and the chivalry of the realm are sitting side by side; and in the outer circle is an indiscriminate crowd, eager, jubilant, and incontrollable. The vacant space in the midst is occupied by five upright stakes, to which are bound, in quaint flame-coloured garments, a Moriscoe, three Jews, and one who, though neither Jew nor Moriscoe, has been reading feloniously an ancient book written 1500 years before by certain fishermen of Galilee.

Even without the intervention of the Spanish iconoclasts, the more cruel forms of Aztec superstition would probably in a few generations have become obsolete. The bulk of the people called to mind with regret the simpler ritual of their ancestors, when fruits and flowers were sin-offerings or thank-offerings; the higher class of nobles had begun to resent the predominance of the hierarchy, and even the monarchs themselves chafed occasionally at their bondage to the spiritual powers. And beyond the immediate circle of Mexico itself its theological system did not extend. It was not, according to all appearance, a proselytizing religion; and its sovereigns were content with the tribute, and did not insist on the orthodoxy of their subjects. Montezuma also, though like Agamemnon he were "king of Argos," was not, like him, "king of the islands." His dominion, indeed, hardly extended to the verge of the mainland, and the character of the natives who were beyond the shadow of Aztec despotism differed materially from that of the Mexicans proper. It scarcely admits of a doubt, that the Mexicans stood in a relation to their subjects similar to that which Dietrich of Berne or Alboin the Lombard stood to the Roman provincials. They occupied the land as masters, but they were not kith or kin with their subjects. The character of the islanders generally, and of the races which inhabited the sea-coast, resembled that of the natives of Otaheite when

they were discovered by Cooke. Neither the Otaheitans nor the Indians were capable, without foreign admixture, of any strong or progressive form of civilisation; yet it was an evil destiny, evil as the nemesis which in ancient belief was attached to the Pelasgian and Achæan races, that consigned a people so generally docile and humane to the discipline of the Spaniard.

Of their gentle, winning, and guileless disposition there is a chain of evidence from the epoch of their discovery. Columbus describes them as "a loving, uncovetous people, so docile in all things, that he believed in all the world there was not a better people or a better country; they love their neighbours as themselves, and they have the sweetest and gentlest way of talking in the world, and always with a smile." Their outward appearance was prepossessing, the expression of their countenance was mild, their form beautiful, their complexion good, and their movements graceful. Of their moral qualities, as of their religious dogmas, it is difficult to judge, since our knowledge of them is derived from those whose interest it was to represent both as inconsistent with the ethics of Europe and the doctrines of the most Catholic church. Mr. Helps believes them to have been less treacherous than most other uncultivated people. But even of their inclination to deceive we have but suspicious evidence. Fraud is the weapon of the weak, and the imputation of fraud is never more frequent than when the oppressor and his victims have no language in common. The Indian of North America is, indeed, both fraudulent and ferocious. But the Huron and the Blackfoot had, before their intercourse with Europe commenced, attained almost to the proficiency of civilised man in the arts of war and diplomacy. He was, in Lear's phrase, "man sophisticated," not "the simple native of the new-found isle." Indolence, again, is a staple charge brought by the Spaniards against the Indians; and to those who have beheld the *vis inertie* of the modern descendants of the conquerors the charge will appear about as reasonable as the proverbial reproof of the devil to sin. The charge, however, even if well-grounded, resolves itself into a very simple form. The Indian had few wants, a genial climate, and a sufficient, if not an abundant, supply of fruits good for food. Gold he prized only as a personal ornament, but its possession conveyed neither rank nor power. For himself, therefore, he had few motives to toil; and it demanded casuistry beyond the subtlety of the Salamancan professors to convince him that it was meet and right and his bounden duty to delve in the mine or to moil in the maize-field, in order that his Spanish lords might have bread enough and gold enough to satiate their greed. Lastly, the Indian's deficiency in courage may be treated with the same doubt as his imputed idleness. What alacrity could be expected

from any man who, under a tropical sun, is employed in gathering gold for other people? or what extraordinary valour is to be looked for from races who fought naked against men clad in steel, used lances of wood sharpened in the fire or pointed with stones or fish-bones, against antagonists provided with iron weapons and fire-arms; regarded the horse and the bloodhound with equal awe and superstition, and who knew as much of the rudiments of military discipline as the Spaniards of that day knew of the shells and mortars employed against the Redan and Malakhoff towers?

We have regarded the two extremes of Indian civilisation as it was seen by the first explorers: that of the islanders and of portions of the continent,—a saturnian realm; and that of the Aztecs, advanced in some respects beyond that of Christendom in the fifteenth century, inferior to it only in the muniments of war, and equal to it in the ferocity of its political feuds, and the strength and rigour of its church-establishment. A second and more interesting question now opens upon us—the sources of that civilisation, as displayed in the empires of Peru and Mexico, or in the races which, independently of these, had begun to ascend in the scale of political life.

Our ethnological data are scarcely sufficient to justify us in pronouncing whether the inhabitants of the New World, at the time of its discovery, should be regarded as one race of men, or as a congeries of separate emigrations from the eastern shores of Asia. The Aztecs were certainly distinct from their subject-population; but the difference between them may not have been greater than that which is ordinarily perceived between mountain and valley tribes, for example, between the Dorians and the subject Achæans, or between the Franks and the Gauls. Whether, however, one or many emigrations from Asia successively peopled America, it appears that there were two principal centres from which the development of the Indians proceeded, one radiating to the north, the other to the south of the Isthmus of Darien, and represented respectively in the civilisation of Mexico and Peru. It is remarkable also, that in both these nations the first epoch or seed of higher cultivation was attributed to the sudden appearance among them of persons differing from themselves in aspect and origin. Among the Peruvians, Mango Capac, accompanied by his sister, Mama Oello, first introduced a form of polity and a code of laws, and then ascended to his father the sun; among the Mexicans the same good offices were rendered “by a white and bearded man, of broad brow,” and dressed in strange garb, bearing the appellation of Quetzalcohuatl, or “green-feathered snake,” who, after his mission was fulfilled, went away into a far country and was never heard of more. The traditions

of both nations accord in ascribing their earliest legislation to an extraneous, if not, indeed, to a supernatural author.

Of the region from which these benevolent sages descended there is no record, and it is a fruitless speculation to consider whether their laws were a transcript of any great oriental code, contained in the sacred books of the Brahmins, the Bhuddists, or the Chinese. The effects of their legislation were, however, different; for whereas the Peruvians never departed from the laws of the first Inca, and abstained from human sacrifices, offering only the blood of rams and sheep to the sun,—the Mexicans carried the severe penances ordained by Quetzalcohuatl to a higher stage, and offered human victims as the ordinary expiations of the nation and the king. As their great legislator had forbidden such sacrifices, “stopping his ears when spoken to of war, and prescribing flowers and fruits as the only acceptable tribute to the gods,” it seems probable, either that some later dispensation superseded that of Quetzalcohuatl, or that a priest-caste rivetted its chains on a race of warriors by imposing upon them a formal, elaborate, and bloody ritual.

Had not the killing frost of European invasion nipped in the bud the civilisation of the Aztecs and the Peruvians alike, it is probable that each of them would have gradually absorbed all the feebler forms of Indian polity, such as that of the inhabitants of the plains of Bogota, and even that of Araucana; and while the warriors of Anahuac would have spread themselves over the Texas and Florida until they encountered, in the red men of the north, tribes as puissant as themselves, the Peruvians would have extended their milder laws and their agricultural enterprise over the south, until they also met in the nomades of the pampas with races, like those of Scythia and Sarmatia in the Old World, intolerant of repose and local habitation, and prizing beyond wealth and security their freedom to go and come. We conclude this imperfect sketch of the Indian races with the following suggestive passage from the volumes before us:

“Those who wish to study this people must turn to the ruins of the temples, or the tombs at Mitla, Palenque, and Copan; must investigate the primeval remains of buildings to be found on the borders of the vast lake of Titicaca, and the adjacent plain of Tiahuaeo; must consider well the pyramids of Papantla and Cholula; and still further, ponder over the clear signs of an early and considerable civilisation which seems to have existed in a somewhat similar form in places so widely asunder as Canada and the banks of the Orinoco. It has been said, that little will be learnt to advance art or increase our knowledge of beauty from a study of any American monuments; an assertion which I think is completely contradicted by the Grecques on the temple or palace at Mitla, and still more by the recently discovered ruins of Copan.

“Putting aside, however, all questions of beauty, I have no doubt

that it is of the utmost importance that the learned should deeply investigate the monuments of America. I think I foresee a time when these and similar researches, which are being undertaken in various parts of the world, will be made to converge to a far larger knowledge of the early records of this earth than has hitherto been obtained, and will thus assist in solving some of the most important questions which exist with respect to the early peopling of the world, the migration of races, and the capabilities of different races in enduring different climates."

We must now glance briefly at the second important element in the conquest of America—the character of the conquerors themselves. In Europe generally, and in Protestant Europe especially, the Spaniard has been long regarded as the type of pride and hardness of heart. With the mercurial Frenchman he had few points in common, and their disagreement was aggravated by competition for empire. To the Italian he was a stern ruler; and although the common descendants of Philip and Jeanne la Folle occupied the palaces of Madrid and Vienna, the *solita inter fratres odia*, or at least the jealousies of rival crowns, were rife between them. By the Fleming and the Hollander the Castilian was regarded in the same light as the Jews regarded Antiochus Epiphanes, or the Christians of the second century Diocletian. Alba was with them the type of the Spanish nation, and the type also of an incarnate fiend. And among the English the Spanish national character has fared little better, since it is associated with Smithfield and the Armada, with all the crimes done in the Spanish main, and with all the cruelties and insolences committed in the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Even the Peninsular war and its great results effected little towards removing these sinister prejudices; for in it the Spaniard had proved himself slothful, treacherous, and corrupt, in the field and in the cabinet, and a servicable ally only as the fierce, fraudulent, and brutal guerilla.

It is one of the most sagacious surmises of the historian Robertson, that if the archives of American affairs were once fairly thrown open to the public, the character of the Spanish might in some measure be relieved of the stain fixed upon it by the cruelty and rapacity of the discoverers and colonists of the New World. As Robertson's materials for his history were very scanty, not even comprising all the printed documents existing in his day, his surmise was at best a happy guess. Its correctness has been confirmed by Mr. Helps, who has employed in his researches printed authorities unavailable to Robertson, and has had access to manuscripts altogether unknown to him. The character of the early colonists and explorers remains much the same; but that of the Spanish monarchs and their advisers has gained materially by the larger resources of the historian.

It now appears that, so far as the home-government was concerned, there was a strong desire to do justice to the Indians, and even a kindly disposition towards them. Neither was there so much ignorance in colonial affairs as the very novelty of the circumstances might have given reason to suppose; indeed, Mr. Helps more than once expresses his conviction, that modern colonial boards and secretaries would not have managed matters with more wisdom or humanity than Ferdinand and his councillors on some occasions displayed. We have so long been taught to regard the Arragonese monarch as a sort of royal attorney, that it is an agreeable surprise to discover that his shrewdness and selfishness were often abated by a sense of justice and sentiments of compunction, and that, in fact, the poor Indians had few better friends than the master to whom the papal bull had awarded them. His good intentions may indeed be attributed to the benign influence of Isabella of Castile, and doubtless the good seed was sown by her in his politic and not very susceptible bosom. Yet it bore fruit; since, after her decease, Ferdinand persevered in his desire to alleviate the miseries of his new subjects, and to govern his vast colonial empire with justice and even with mildness.

It was his misfortune to be misled by his informants, and ill-served by his delegates. He experienced "the common curse of kings," to be attended either by men who marred his instructions by their ignorance at home, or rendered them ineffectual by their corruption abroad. For one Columbus or Las Casas, he was forced to employ twenty Ovandos and Bobadillas. It was his misfortune also to need money for his European wars, and to live and die in the belief that the American colonies could supply him with speedy and inexhaustible returns of gold. It was the error of his age; it was the bait which even Columbus held out to the monarch, to induce him to countenance and to persevere in the discovery; it was the plea which all his councillors urged; it was the promise that every adventurer held forth when he sued for the royal commission—gold, and yet more gold. With the hope of quick returns of gold, Ferdinand, even against his own better judgment, signed his assent to the *encomiendas* and *repartimientos*; to the imposition of serfage on the Indians; to rending them from their homes; to dividing them in gangs; to overtasking them in the mine and in the maize-field; to supplying the void wrought by famine, pestilence, suicide, and the scourge, with negro labourers; to cruelties transcending the havoc of war; to privations surpassing the dearth of beleaguered cities.

We must content ourselves with merely referring to the instructions given by Ferdinand and the council for Indian affairs to Columbus, and to the laws of Burgos, enacted after some of

the worst results of the conquest had displayed themselves. The former are conceived in the more humane spirit: the latter, though not without consideration for the oppressed, evince a more callous temper in the legislators. The same radical vice appears in them both,—the assumption of a right to the persons and the labour of the Indians.

It was indeed an assumption deeply rooted in the social prejudices of the times, derived from antiquity, transmitted in the writings of Aristotle—"the master of the wise" in the middle ages—accepted by all European legislators, prevalent throughout Asia, and unquestioned until negro-emancipation first established the principle that no circumstances justify the making or the holding of slaves. From the original guilt of this error the Spaniards in the sixteenth century are exempt. It was in the abuse of the assumed right that their guilt consisted. We shall perhaps be enabled to understand the dealings of the conquerors with the conquered more clearly, by reverting to the national characteristics of the Spaniards at this period, and to the causes that produced them. In the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Spaniards were almost as isolated and peculiar a people as the Hebrew race itself. Except in the great commercial cities of Cadiz and Barcelona, they had little intercourse with the rest of Europe. Within the rocky basins of their own sierras the provinces of the peninsula had little communication with one another. Local jealousies were rife: the Castilian looked askance at the Estremaduran; the natives of Biscay had no dealings with those of Andalusia. In no land did the pride of birth so much assume the aspect of a passion. The least admixture of Moorish blood was as repulsive to a pure Goth, in whose veins flowed the *sangre azul*, as the least tint of negro hue is to the precisians of New York and Boston. A descendant of Pelayo's followers would have deemed himself less dishonoured by a blow than by the friendly grasp of a Jew; and the lowest Manchegan serf was as proud of being an "old Christian" as a German baron of his sixteen quarterings. To the prejudices of birth and soil were added those of religion. All the nations of the earth admitted the supremacy of the Church, but, in his own esteem, the Spaniard was most Catholic. His antipathies clung to him even when serving his country abroad. The French he hated for his levity; the German and the Englishman for their gross meals and deep potations; the Fleming he accounted a huckster; the Italian a coward or an atheist. The contempt which he felt for the nations of Christendom was not likely to relax in favour of races who sat in outer darkness. To the Jew the oracles of God had once been confided; the Saracen professed to reverence the patriarchs and the lawgiver of the Old Testament; but the Indians had been from the beginning the

children of Satan, without law and without God in their world; and were given into the hands of the true believers, as the Canaanites had been of yore to the posterity of Jacob. So the Castilian in the sixteenth century thought and acted. Yet we should do him, or rather his nation, great injustice, if we thus concluded the reckoning of his qualities. Great virtues as well as great vices appertained to him. It was possible to hate, but hardly possible to despise him. In courage he was undaunted, in enterprise unwearied; his faith was sincere; his loyalty without blemish; and his very arrogance was a mark or an excess of self-respect.

Neither should the Spanish people be measured by the standard of the adventurers who flocked to the New World. Among the explorers and colonists were many both lay and secular for whom neither society nor religion need to blush,—men whom the most virtuous of commonwealths might rank among its heroes, and the least superstitious of churches adopt as its saints. But if camps are frequently the refuge of the most restless and ungovernable of spirits, much more so are expeditions of conquest and colonisation. The family-tie and the state-tie are alike relaxed, if not altogether broken: an adventurer cares not for the opinion of his neighbours or the rebuke of his household. He bears with him the arts and the strength of civilisation; but he himself returns, in some degree, to the freedom of the nomad. Mr. Helps's volumes abound in anecdotes of the early life and training of the more conspicuous pioneers of the conquest. Some, like Ojeda, were notorious for their physical strength; others, like Vasco Nuñez, were runaway debtors: this one had made his native place too hot to hold him; and another had set at naught the vice-chancellor and proctors of the university. The greater expeditions, like that of Cortes, were conducted by picked men; the importance of the venture demanding a careful choice of instruments. But the less extensive and systematic discoveries were undertaken by men resembling those who resorted to David in the cave of Adullam; "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented," flocked to the banner of some leader as reckless as themselves. Over such spirits the home-government had no control: and often a new region was explored and its inhabitants were expelled, enslaved, or even exterminated, before the council of the Indies could interfere, or the crown take them under its protection.

It has been so usual to regard the Spanish monarchy as an unmixt despotism, and historians have so often confounded the powers exercised by Ferdinand the Catholic with those usurped by his successors after the battle at Villalar had crushed the liberties of Spain, that the reader who is not previously cognisant

of the change may remark, with some surprise, how accessible Ferdinand was to the petitions, the representations, and even the rebuke of his subjects. Las Casas, after ineffectual patience in the antechamber, makes his way at last to the royal closet, and states the grievances of his Indian clients with freedom and favourable acceptance. Ferdinand is willing and even eager to listen to evidence, and puts what he has collected fairly before his council. His soldiers retain the freedom of their Gothic ancestors; and his priests are rather the directors than the keepers of his conscience.

“He was reckoned

The wisest prince that there had reigned by many
A year before :”

but his wisdom was not the cunning of his great-grandson Philip; and, compared with the jealousy and seclusion of the Escorial under his successor, Ferdinand was as free to all men as when justice was administered in the city-gates.

There are few more tragic stories than that of the conquest of America; there is no more mournful spectacle than the long decrepitude of Spain; and history affords no more appalling example of the nemesis which impends equally over guilty households and guilty nations. Writing of the Indians as they appeared to the first explorers, Mr. Helps employs the following remarkable words: “In many parts of America the manners and perhaps the whole aspect of the people would have given a traveller the notion of persons of decayed fortune, who had once been more prosperous and formidable than they were now, or who had been the offshoot of a more defined and forcible people.” Is not this the very aspect of the Spaniards at the present moment? the very burden of the poet’s reproach?

“Oh, could their ancient Incas rise again,
How would they take up Israel’s taunting strain!
Art thou too fallen, Iberia? do we see
The robber and the murderer weak as we?
Thou that hast wasted earth, and dared despise
Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies;
Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid
Low in the pits thine avarice has made:
We come with joy from our eternal rest
To see the oppressor in his turn oppressed.”

The armies of Spain are no longer formidable to Europe; her navy is scarcely sufficient to defend any one of her principal harbours; her credit has sunk; her commerce is departed; no plate-fleet annually recruits her exchequer; no vice-roys depart from her shores; no slaves delve in her mines. Her chiefest of cities are too wide for their scanty population, and by their gloom and silence recall to the traveller the stillness of Bagdad and the sadness of Ispahan. Spain, since the reign of Philip II., has

not only looked to the past, but also rested on the past. Rejecting all change, she has become herself a monument of change. She that sat as a queen is now least among the nations: she that ruled in Ophir is a lazar on the earth.

On reverting to what we have written, we feel aware of some injustice to Mr. Helps. We have been dwelling upon the elements rather than upon the contents of his book. But inasmuch as the author himself has intimated that the distribution of the races in the New World first turned his attention to the subject of their conquest, and since the character of the conquerors formed also an important feature in their dealings with the conquered, we have sought to bring prominently forward the central point of his observation, and securely commend the details of his narrative to our readers. Our limits forbade us to indulge in the pleasure of entering Mr. Helps's portrait-gallery, and drawing from his masterly sketches of Columbus, Cortes, Las Casas, of the vice-roys of the New World, of the councils which drew up their instructions, of the shrewd yet not hard Ferdinand, and of the beautiful and bounteous Isabella. We know of few undertakings more difficult than the one which he has, in our opinion, so far successfully performed—the telling over again an oft-repeated tale. We can imagine few discoveries more agreeable than to have discerned that, without supplanting any earlier labourer, there was still room in the field for fresh speculation and research. Hitherto the conquerors alone have occupied the foreground: in these pages their history forms but a portion of the narrative; and we are led to contemplate not only their deeds, but the result also of their actions. We trust that we may very shortly possess a record by the same hand of the conquest of South America, and survey the civilisation of the Incas under the guidance of a writer who has so ably delineated the fiercer and less attractive empire of Anahuac.

ART. III.—THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF DR. THOMAS
YOUNG.

Life of Thomas Young, M.D., F.R.S., &c. By George Peacock, D.D., Dean of Ely, &c. 8vo. London, Murray, 1855.

The Miscellaneous Works of Dr. T. Young. Edited by G. Peacock, D.D., Dean of Ely, and John Leitch, Esq. 3 vols. 8vo. London, Murray, 1855.

THE name of Thomas Young, up to the present time, has been hardly known among his countrymen beyond a circle, extensive no doubt, of private friends and men of science. Yet he was, perhaps, one of the most extraordinary men of whom the present or any age can boast. His celebrity, however, is probably becoming greater every day; and the recent, though long-promised, publication of his life by the master hand of the Dean of Ely, accompanying a reprint of his varied and numerous miscellaneous works, under the able editorship of Mr. Leitch, hitherto only found scattered through a wide range of periodicals, some of them little known or difficult to procure, will probably do much to secure for his name its just place among the most eminent cultivators of literature and discoverers in science; while his personal history, now first exhibited in detail, will evince the wonderful variety and extent of his manifold attainments and high qualities and endowments, moral, intellectual, and physical, so as fairly to place him in the very highest rank of talent and accomplishment in the estimation of readers of all classes. In the wish to further such an object, we propose in the present article in the first instance to give a sketch of his personal history, after which we shall offer a brief analysis of some of his chief literary and scientific labours.

He was born at Milverton in Somersetshire, June 13, 1773, of a family belonging to the Society of Friends, and was brought up in a strict adherence to the tenets of that sect. His intellectual development was rapid, and from his earliest years, what particularly strikes us is the unusual *quantity* of reading he describes himself as going through; he had, for example, read *through* the Bible *twice* before he was four years old! besides other books. He learned by heart at that age a vast amount of English poetry. In his seventh year he went to a school at Stapleton, near Bristol, where his progress in a year and a half was equally wonderful. In that time, previously knowing nothing of Latin, he learned all Lilly's grammar, and

read *through* two books of Phædrus, besides a variety of English works. He next resided at home, and acquired new tastes and ideas as to some elements of mathematical and mechanical science from an acquaintance formed with a neighbouring land-surveyor. The details of this portion of his life are furnished from an autobiographical sketch written in Latin at the age of fourteen, which goes on to inform us, that in the next year (1782) he was removed to the school of Mr. Thompson, at Compton, in Dorsetshire, where in four years, again we are astonished at the mere *amount* of reading he went through, not less than at its miscellaneous character. Every book so perused is minutely entered on his list; and besides this, he acquired from the usher, an ingenious man, some practical acquaintance with optical and electrical instruments, besides painting and other branches of the arts. From another individual he acquired some taste for barometrical observation, as well as for botany and microscopic researches; and finding in some experimental book a calculation for which fluxions were necessary, he forthwith read through a treatise on that branch of mathematics. His classical knowledge at this time did not include prosody; but this he acquired afterwards. He, however, learnt Italian and French; and on leaving the school, returned home to the study of Hebrew, telescope-making, and turning, and soon extended his acquirements to Chaldee, Syriac, and Persian.

In 1787, an arrangement was made for his partaking in the instruction of a private tutor along with Mr. Hudson Gurney, then a youth of his own age, residing with his grandfather, Mr. Barclay, at Youngsbury in Hertfordshire. The tutor was Mr. Hodgkin, the author of the *Calligraphia Græca*. Here his classical studies were resumed on a more accurate system; and notwithstanding a remark of his biographer, that his reading was select rather than extensive, we are still struck by the *number* of the books he read, not less than by the regularity and assiduity with which their contents appear to have been mastered. His ms. journals attest the earnestness with which these studies were carried on, and exhibit many original remarks and reflections called forth in the course of them.

The books enumerated, we must own, seem in some instances oddly selected and associated, especially as regards the mathematical portion of his studies; he had already read fluxions, yet we find him now studying Simson's Euclid, conic sections, algebra, and popular astronomy! His intense application seemed likely to injure his health; but relaxation for a time, and medical care, soon restored him.

About this time we find his uncle, Dr. Brocklesby, taking an especial interest in his pursuits; and an unbroken correspond-

ence maintained between the uncle and nephew from this date till the death of the former forms one of the most interesting features in his life, many extracts being given which attest the value of the intercourse so carried on, and convey a pleasing picture of the affectionate solicitude of the elder relation, and the due sense of it entertained by the object of his care.

During the two years from 1790 to 1792 (when he finally quitted Youngsbury), the list of books *read through* is appalling. It is to our minds difficult to conceive how the mere mechanical process of carrying the eye through such a mass of lines and pages, without reference to other considerations, could have been effected within the given time. It would form a problem for calculation, which we should be unwilling to enter upon. For instance, besides some thirty authors, classical and scientific, the *whole* of Newton's *Principia* is mentioned, which we do not believe that a student even of considerable powers could really master in a much longer space of time, even without interruption from other pursuits; yet, among the other works read in the same time, the *whole* of the Greek tragedians, and Blackstone's *Commentaries*, are casually set down! small morsels swallowed by the way,—stimulants to the mental appetite! Nevertheless, his biographer assures us that he read nothing hastily or cursorily; his memory was tenacious, and whatever he had once mastered he never forgot; besides his reading, too, he always composed exercises in the languages he studied, and wrote journals of all his proceedings!

In 1792, Young gave perhaps the earliest proof of his classical attainments and literary powers in some translations from Shakspeare into Greek in imitation of the Greek tragedians, which were much lauded by competent scholars; though, as is usual in such cases, acute critics did not fail to pounce on some real or suspected false quantities or solecisms in style. An amusing account is also given of a conversation among a select circle, in which he met Porson, and was fully able to sustain his part in remarks called forth by questions of various readings, and the niceties of Greek metres.

In the same year he removed to London (having determined on following the medical profession), in order to attend the usual course at the hospitals. Here his connection with Dr. Brocklesby, then in considerable repute as a physician, opened to him the acquaintance of many of the leading persons of the day in literature and science. He found leisure still to carry on his classical studies; he also pursued a physiological and optical inquiry into the disputed question of the power of the eye to adapt itself to distinct vision for objects at different distances. This formed the subject of his first paper communicated to the Royal Society,

and facilitated his admission into that body in 1794. Among other eminent persons, he had become favourably known to the Duke of Richmond, then Master of the Ordnance, who offered him the situation of private secretary; but on mature consideration this offer was declined; and in pursuit of his originally destined profession he next removed to Edinburgh, with a view to attend the medical lectures of that far-famed school. In his way thither he made a tour in the north of England, and in almost all parts formed acquaintance with persons of eminence; more especially was this the case on his arrival at Edinburgh, then distinguished by the residence of several professors of high celebrity, besides other literary and scientific characters. He here carried on with his usual diligence, not only the regular professional studies which were his immediate object, but a variety of miscellaneous researches, besides journals and correspondence, more especially Greek criticism; his proficiency showing itself, as on several other occasions, in effusions in Greek verse. It was during his sojourn in Edinburgh that a material change took place in his habits; renouncing the *externals* of the sect in which he had been brought up, and scandalising some of his more rigid connections by taking lessons in dancing and music, and frequenting the theatre; yet (as his biographer assures us) without the smallest detriment to his religious or moral principles.

During the summer recess he made a tour in the north of Scotland on horseback; the picture which he draws of himself and his accoutrements for the journey must be given in his own words to convey the complete idea of the man, as a friend expressed it, "*in se totus teres atque rotundus*," equipped for the Highlands.

"I was mounted on a stout well-made black horse, fourteen hands high, young and spirited, which I had purchased from my friend Cathcart. I had before me my oiled linens, the spencer with a separate camlet-cover; under me a pair of saddle-bags, well filled with three or four changes of linen, a waistcoat and breeches, materials for writing and for drawing, paper, pens, ink, pencils, and colours, packing-paper and twine for minerals; soap-brushes and a razor; a small edition of Thomson's *Seasons*; a third flute in a bag; some music, principally Scotch, bound with some blank music-paper; wafers, a box for botanising, a thermometer; two little bottles with spirits for preserving insects; a bag for picking up stones; two maps of Scotland, Ainslie's small one, and Sayer's; letters of recommendation. The bags had pockets at the end; one containing a pair of shoes, the other boards, with straps, and paper for drying plants. I found my bags at first an incumbrance, but became afterwards more reconciled to them. They are to a saddle what pockets are to a coat; and who objects to wearing pockets? But they were wetted the first day, and stained their contents: this will make me more careful in future."—p. 63.

In 1795 Young embarked for Germany, to perfect his medical studies at Göttingen. He gives amusing accounts of his impressions as to the general tone of society and state of literature and science in that celebrated seat of learning. The programme of his course of study is somewhat remarkable from the large admixture of other lessons with the medical; music, drawing, dancing, and above all equitation, including the most remarkable feats of horsemanship, form essential parts of the academical curriculum; every one of them being set down as to be followed up with a seriousness and spirit of emulation fully equalling that displayed in the pursuit of the legitimate objects of medical education. Greek versification continued to be a prominent and favourite occupation, as well as lectures on politics and general literature. The confidence and decision with which he gives his criticisms on the several professors seem fully sustained by the proficiency which all seem to admit he evinced in these singularly diversified branches of accomplishment; and at length, with a characteristic sketch of the mode in which an examination was conducted in those days, we find him emerging in the full honours of the medical degree.

After evincing his wonderful powers of agility, not only in riding two horses at once and other like feats, but in enacting with unparalleled applause at a court masquerade at Brunswick the character of Harlequin, we find him continuing his travels through most of the German principalities, and meditating a still more extended tour; which, however, was put a stop to by the approaching symptoms of war: and in 1797 he returned to England.

He was now twenty-four years of age; but in order to obtain the footing of a physician practising in London, it was necessary, according to the then existing regulations, that he should graduate at one of the English universities. Why he did not at an earlier period, and more suitable age, take the step of entering at one of those seats of learning, does not appear; but he perhaps had not at first any very settled plans, and this may have been an after-thought. The University of Cambridge at that time allowed of some modifications in its usual routine, by which students of the class in which he would be ranked were permitted certain indulgences in regard to the usual requirements of the academical course. Some colleges held out particular attractions in this respect, and he therefore, immediately after his return, entered himself as a Fellow Commoner at Emmanuel College.

From recollections of his mode of life when at Cambridge, a fellow of his college has put on record a highly characteristic sketch of Young's peculiarities, to which he was by no means inclined to be indulgent. We will give a few extracts from the most striking parts:

"When the master introduced Young to his tutors, he jocularly said, 'I have brought you a pupil qualified to read lectures to his tutors.' This, however, as might be concluded, he did not attempt : and the forbearance was mutual ; he was never required to attend the common duties of the college.

. . . . I remember his meeting Dr. Parr in the college combination-room ; and when the doctor had made, as was not unusual with him, some dogmatical observation on a point of scholarship, Young said firmly, 'Bentley, sir, was of a different opinion,' immediately quoting his authority, and showing his intimate knowledge of the subject. Parr said nothing ; but when Dr. Young retired, asked who he was ; and though he did not seem to have heard his name before, he said, 'A smart young man that.'

. . . . The views, objects, character, and acquirements of our mathematicians were very different then to what they are now, and Young, who was certainly beforehand with the world, perceived their defects. Certain it is that he looked down upon the science, and would not cultivate the acquaintance of any of our philosophers. Wood's books I have heard him speak of with approbation ; but Vince he treated with contempt, and he afterwards returned the compliment. I recollect once asking Vince his opinion of Young ; he said, he knew nothing correctly. 'What can you think,' says he, 'of a man writing upon mechanics who does not know the principle of a coach-wheel ?' This alludes to a mistake of Dr. Young's on this subject in his *Natural Philosophy*.

. . . . I remember having invited him to meet at dinner Mr. Whiter, of Clare Hall, who, though an admirable scholar, was a wit and a *bon-vivant*, while Young took no delight in the pleasures of the table, and never could either make a joke or understand one. Whiter quoted something from the *Oxford Sausage* ; and when our philosopher betrayed his ignorance of the existence of such a work, with his total inability to taste or relish the allusion, it was almost painful to witness the ridicule which he was obliged to sustain ; but, to do him justice, he did sustain it with perfect good-humour.

He never obtruded his various learning in conversation ; but if appealed to on the most difficult subject, he answered in a quick, flip-pant, decisive way, as if he was speaking of the most easy ; and in this mode of talking he differed from all the clever men that I ever saw. His reply never seemed to cost him an effort, and he did not appear to think there was any credit in being able to make it. He did not assert any superiority, or seem to suppose that he possessed it ; but spoke as if he took it for granted that we all understood the matter as well as he did. He never spoke in praise of any of the writers of the day, even in his own peculiar department, and could not be persuaded to discuss their merits. He was never personal. He would speak of knowledge in itself, of what was known or what might be known, but never of himself, or any other, as having discovered any thing, or as likely to do so.

His language was correct, his utterance rapid, and his sentences,

though without any affectation, never left unfinished. But his words were not those in familiar use, and the arrangement of his ideas seldom the same as those he conversed with. He was, therefore, worse calculated than any man I ever knew for the communication of knowledge. . . . I remember his taking me with him to the Royal Institution to hear him lecture to a number of silly women and *dilettante* philosophers. But nothing could show less judgment than the method he adopted; for he presumed, like many other lecturers and preachers, on the knowledge, and not on the ignorance of his hearers.

In his manners he had something of the stiffness of the quaker remaining; and though he never said or did a rude thing, he never made use of any of the forms of politeness. Not that he avoided them through affectation; his behaviour was natural without timidity, and easy without boldness. He rarely associated with the young men of the college, who called him, with a mixture of derision and respect, 'Phenomenon Young;' but he lived on familiar terms with the fellows in the common room. He had few friends of his own age or pursuits in the university; and not having been introduced to many of those who were distinguished either by their situation or talent, he did not seek their society, nor did they seek him. They did not like to admit the superiority of any one *in statu pupillari*; and he would not converse with any one but as an equal.

It was difficult to say how he employed himself; he read little, and though he had access to the college and university libraries, he was seldom seen in them. There were no books piled on his floor, no papers scattered on his table, and his room had all the appearance of belonging to an idle man. I once found him blowing smoke through long tubes, and I afterwards saw a representation of the effect in the *Transactions of the Royal Society*, to illustrate one of his papers on sound; but he was not in the habit of making experiments. He walked little, and rode less; but having learnt to ride the great horse abroad, he used to *pace* round Parker's Piece on a hackney; he once made an attempt to follow the hounds, but a severe fall prevented any further exhibition.

He seldom gave an opinion, and never volunteered one. He never laid down the law like other learned doctors, or uttered apothegms or sayings to be remembered. Indeed, like most mathematicians—though we hear of abstract mathematics—he never seemed to think abstractedly. A philosophical fact, a difficult calculation, an ingenious instrument, or a new invention, would engage his attention; but he never spoke of morals, of metaphysics, or of religion."—*Life*, p. 116.

When in Germany, he casually mentions, among his other studies, his varied feats of horsemanship and tight-rope dancing, attendance on lectures and iambic effusions, that he read Kant,—but speaks of him in a very slighting tone; which fully accords with the observation of his Cambridge friend.

These recollections, characteristic as they manifestly are, seem, to require some little qualification before we can entirely adopt the portrait; especially in respect to Young's employment

of his time. That he did not pile books on his floor, or litter his table with papers, is merely an instance of his characteristic minute neatness and attention to order. It would have been altogether at variance with his unalterable habits that he should be an idle man at any time, more especially in the midst of a place furnishing such ample means and inducements for study. In fact, he must at this time have been engaged on the subjects of many of those essays and communications which so soon afterwards appeared in memoirs of societies or the scientific periodicals. It was, however, quite in character that he should carefully avoid all affectation of being a studious man, or all display of the apparatus of study.

Soon after he was settled at Cambridge (in December 1797), a material change was made in Young's prospects by the death of his uncle, Dr. Brocklesby, who bequeathed him a handsome fortune, not indeed very large, but apparently sufficient to render him independent in his choice of a course of life. We have no evidence put before us by his biographer as to the motives which may have actuated him; but we find him still regularly continuing to keep his terms at Cambridge—though residing much in London—until in due course he passed through the requisite degrees in arts, and subsequently in medicine. In 1800 he first commenced practice in London, though he had not as yet actually graduated as M.D., having taken up his abode in a house in Welbeck Street, which he continued to occupy for twenty-five years. His attention was certainly distracted from purely medical pursuits, as it always had been, by an extensive devotion to a variety of literary and scientific subjects, more especially those of a mathematical and physical kind; which it would seem hardly possible for him not to have seen must tend to interfere with his professional success, dependent as it necessarily is in so large a degree on the mere caprice of the public, especially dependent on the notion, often extremely ill-founded, of the degree in which the practitioner exclusively devotes himself to professional avocations; a notion which would hardly be modified by the transparent anonymous disguise which he assumed in his various publications.

In 1799 he communicated to the Royal Society his paper on "Sound and Light," containing the germ of his after-discoveries. In the following year it appeared in the *Transactions*, and was succeeded by several others on allied subjects, to which we shall refer more particularly in the sequel. A number of minor essays on mathematical, physical, and literary subjects were soon after given to the world in periodicals.

But the great work in which he engaged at this period was his *Lectures on Natural Philosophy*; the substance of a course which he delivered in the theatre of the Royal Institution, where he had

been appointed professor in that department. The fate of the *lectures* and of the *work* has been very different: the former were ill-attended, and soon ceased to attract; while the latter has become more highly valued the more it has been known, as containing the condensed results of profound and extensive inquiries into all branches of physical science, and of which it has been truly observed, even at the present day, no student in any branch ought to be ignorant; as, from the number of profound suggestions and the accumulated references to all that has been done in each subject, it will always form an invaluable source of information, and must be regarded as a standard work in our scientific literature. That lectures of so profound and condensed a character should not have been popular, is easily understood; they were beyond the capacity of the audience, and were not set off by any attractions in the manner of the lecturer. The style was indeed precise, and clear to one conversant with the subject; but wholly wanting in that freedom of illustration, discursive allusion, and simplicity of structure, which are requisite to arrest and retain the attention of a mixed audience. The lectures, moreover, were written out *in extenso*, and read, not spoken; which alone would deprive them of that life and familiarity which is so essential in this kind of delivery.

These lectures occupied the year 1802, in which year also he was named Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society—an office which he continued to hold through his life. Ten years later he was urged to accept the principal secretaryship; but declined, on the ground that it might interfere with his professional success; an apparently somewhat strange allegation, when his pursuits altogether seemed to have so decided a tendency of the same kind.

In 1804 he resigned the professorship at the Royal Institution. The lectures were not published till 1807. His *Syllabus of the Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* was printed in 1802, and afterwards incorporated in his *Illustrations of Laplace* in 1821; a work on which Dr. Peacock makes some critical remarks,* questioning its utility in a way natural to one accustomed to the more rigid school of mathematics, but, perhaps, hardly enough allowing for the requirements of general readers, whose object may be to attain a comprehensive view of the foundations of science rather than the regular exercise of mathematical habits of investigation.

Young's essay on *Cohesion of Fluids* was communicated to the Royal Society in 1804, and was followed by the publication of some severe criticisms on the subsequent investigations of Laplace, as well as some minor contributions: this, however, was but one of the many and varied researches on physical sub-

* Life, p. 191.

jects which continued to occupy him, in spite of his often-expressed determination to devote himself to his profession.

In the summer of the same year Dr. Young married Miss Eliza Maxwell, a lady who, to other attractions and good qualities, added that of a full appreciation of her husband's attainments, and a deep and intelligent interest in the success of his pursuits. It appears to have been a thoroughly congenial union. To the unreserved and lively correspondence which Young kept up with his three sisters-in-law we owe some of the most striking and entertaining passages in his memoirs.

Meanwhile his professional practice advanced; but probably not with much rapidity or general success. Every summer he adjourned to Worthing, and there practised as well as in London. In 1807 he gave medical lectures at the Middlesex Hospital, which we are left to infer were not more *popular* than his former course; though, we doubt not, as solid and excellent. The preparation of these lectures, and the examination of candidates, he somewhat characteristically describes as "amusements, which, besides the more serious employments of parties, concerts, and dances, really give me very little more spare time than is necessary for visiting my patients." Notwithstanding, he was in 1811 elected one of the physicians to St. George's Hospital—a situation which he retained to the end of his life. The students' verdict was, "Dr. Young is a great philosopher, but a bad physician;" an impression which his biographer takes some pains to combat, but not, we think, very successfully.

In 1814 he produced an elaborate report, the result of the inquiries of a commission issued by the Admiralty, on Sepping's improvements in ship-building. The reply of an official is characteristic: "Though science is much respected by their lordships, and your paper is much esteemed by them, it is too learned."

In 1816 he was named secretary to a commission for ascertaining the length of the seconds' pendulum, as the basis of a system of measures. To the labours of this, and another commission on the alleged dangers of gas, he added those of superintendent of the Nautical Almanac, and secretary to the Board of Longitude, to which he was appointed in 1818. The entire management of that publication, and of the Board itself, became shortly after the subject of much acrimonious controversy, into the merits of which our limits forbid our entering; but the details constitute one of the most interesting portions of Dr. Peacock's work. We anticipate the order of time to observe, that when the Board was abolished in 1828, Dr. Young was retained by the Admiralty in the capacity of superintendent of the Almanac, and continued unhappily engaged in an irritating controversy respecting its management to the period of his death.

In 1821 he made a tour on the Continent, and was honourably and warmly received by the *savans* at Paris.

In 1824 he was appointed by the Palladium Insurance Company to the office of physician and inspector of calculations, with a salary of 400*l.* a year, he having declined what would probably have been a far more lucrative offer of shares. This led him to extensive investigations on the subject of the value of life, published in several essays and reports. Besides these, numerous articles on a variety of subjects concerning hydraulics, mechanics, and engineering, were about this period composed for different journals and encyclopædias. The most remarkable of these, perhaps, is his article on the Tides, in the Supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

In 1826, on some accession of fortune, he removed to a larger house in Park Square, and in the same year received the very distinguished honour of being elected one of the eight foreign associates of the French Academy of Sciences. On the retirement of Sir H. Davy from the chair of the Royal Society, he was talked of as his successor, but evinced no wish for the situation, which was, as is well known, conferred on Mr. Davies Gilbert. Dr. Young's great attainments as a classical scholar and general philologist were conspicuously displayed in his various researches, partly of a classical, partly of an antiquarian character, on various ancient inscriptions, especially some from Pompeii, and in deciphering the Herculaneum Mss.: many of these researches were communicated to various societies and journals, others appeared as articles in the *Quarterly Review*. It would be impossible, within our limits, to go into any examination of them. In fact, during the later period of his life, there was hardly any topic of high literary interest which did not more or less engage his attention. But the subject which most especially occupied him was the interpretation of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, to which we shall revert in the sequel.

The account of the last few months of his life is supplied from a memoir by his intimate friend, Mr. Hudson Gurney. For some years he had suffered much from asthma, and in February 1829 the attacks became so violent as to cause great alarm, and reduced him to a state of extreme weakness. He, however, continued to amuse himself, as he termed it, by literary avocations, especially the completion of his Egyptian Dictionary. He was perfectly aware of his danger, but evinced the utmost calmness and self-possession. He observed, "that he had taken the sacraments of the church" on the day preceding, and could patiently await the issue of his disorder. He gradually sank, and died on May 10, 1829.

Ample and varied as are the illustrations afforded by these

memoirs of the *intellectual* endowments of this remarkable man, they are very defective in affording any *direct* elucidation of the higher question of his *moral* and *religious* character and sentiments. As to the former, we easily collect from the tenor of the narrative that he was a person of a naturally imperturbable temper; even amid neglect and disappointment, disparagement and controversial attacks, he always maintained the same calm tone in his manner towards his opponents; if ever temporarily irritated, he never knew a feeling of lasting enmity or ill-will. He was on all occasions actuated by the most strict and conscientious principles of rectitude and honour. He felt no temptation to excess or intemperance,—so commonly indulged in in his younger days,—and he was a person of irreproachable moral purity. But, without any disparagement, we may be permitted to surmise, that his virtue was rather of that negative cast which is associated with a passionless constitution.

He delighted in the society of lively and accomplished women; but there is not an indication of his having experienced a warmer impulse. His gallantry was, indeed, displayed on one occasion, when a young lady had inscribed some lines in a summer-house (throwing out a delicate hint of the writer's unhappiness), by placing under them, not an impassioned reply, but—a translation of them into Greek elegiacs! His marriage is expressly described by his biographer as one “of mutual affection and esteem;” but at the same time we are told, “he attached himself to the members of his wife’s family with more than the ordinary affection of son and brother-in-law, more especially to her three sisters.” He had no children.

As to his religious views, though we would be the last to indulge in a prying curiosity into what a man may wish to conceal in the inmost recesses of his soul in precise proportion to the depth and sincerity of his convictions, yet we cannot forbear the wish to know how the most important of all questions was viewed by a mind of such high powers. On this subject almost nothing is made known in the course of these extended memoirs. Two disclosures only, of the most brief kind, afford a foundation for conjecture. The somewhat cynical Cambridge tutor before quoted says, “He never spoke of morals, of metaphysics, or of religion. Of the last I never heard him say a word,—nothing in favour of any sect, or in opposition to any doctrine; at the same time, no sceptical doubt, no loose assertion, no idle scoff ever escaped him.”* The other intimation we have already cited in his own words, just before his death, “I have taken the sacraments of the church, and can patiently abide the issue.” These are absolutely the only indications of his religious ideas which we can

* Life, p. 119.

discover. The inference we should be disposed to draw would be only that which the analogy of his general character would supply.

The whole cast of his mind was of a positive, matter-of-fact character. He had no taste or capacity for abstract inquiry, especially on metaphysical or moral subjects, where demonstrative certainty is unattainable; hence speculative theology could not interest him; he could have no intimate feeling or concern about points of belief; and, in a practical point of view, a correct morality he uniformly acknowledged and consistently practised. All religious principles beyond these he regarded rather at a distance, yet with the utmost respect and reverence. Any sectarian peculiarities were, of course, as such repulsive to him; and he cast them off as soon as he was independent. He was fully satisfied to acquiesce without question in the conventional requisitions of the established creed and worship, such as they might be. His remark in his last moments, just quoted, is eminently characteristic, even to the very phrase.

Having thus sketched the personal history of Dr. Young, and given some general notion of the almost incredible amount and variety of his literary and scientific labours, we shall proceed to a more particular yet condensed view of the two grand subjects which are prominently conspicuous among them, and with which his name will always be more pre-eminently associated,—his researches on the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and his discoveries in physical optics, leading to the first establishment of a connected mathematical theory of light.

The celebrated inscription on a block of stone found at Rosetta during the expedition to Egypt, and now deposited in the British Museum, is probably well known to most of our readers, even the least curious in these matters, as containing three inscriptions: the first in hieroglyphics, the second in what is termed the "enchorial" or ordinary characters of ancient Egypt, the third in Greek, which states them to be all to the same purport. Hence the antiquary at once sees open to him the prospect, not only of deciphering the unknown contents of the hieroglyphic and Egyptian records from the known Greek, but of establishing at least some general principles of the interpretation of the enigma of hieroglyphics, so tempting even to popular imagination, and of the hardly less enigmatical and doubtful mode of writing practised by the ancient Egyptians. The stone, as is well known, is considerably mutilated, especially at the *beginning* of the hieroglyphics and at the *end* of the Greek; so that only a portion could be expected to receive such elucidation. Yet the eminent scholars Heyne and Porson gave conjectural restorations of the lost parts of the Greek.

The investigation of the hieroglyphics and the enchorial parts soon began to occupy the attention of the eminent orientalist Silvestre de Sacy,—of Akerblad, a Swedish antiquarian and scholar,—and afterwards of Champollion and others. Dr. Young was among the first who gave attention to the subject, and by diligent comparison, within the course of the year 1814, was enabled to give a conjectural translation. This, however, must be understood as referring generally to the substance; for the main difficulty, of course, was to decipher the verbal construction or solution into individual characters, and the correspondence of those words or letters with the hieroglyphic symbols. It was in this more delicate inquiry that the whole difficulty and the source of all the subsequent controversies was found. His translation was printed anonymously; and a revised version of it appeared in the Cambridge *Museum Criticum*, in 1816.

The attempt to identify the enchorial characters with the corresponding hieroglyphics proceeded more slowly, and, sanguine as were the expectations entertained at first, both Young and the other inquirers soon found the wisdom and necessity of concentrating their attention on the perfect verification of a very few forms in the first instance, as a clue to the rest.

With reference to the conflicting claims set up to the elucidation of these remarkable inscriptions, those of Dr. Young are thus maintained by his biographer:

"It was Dr. Young who first determined, and by no easy process, that the 'rings'* on the Rosetta stone contained the name of Ptolemy; it was Dr. Young who determined that the semicircle and oval found at the end of the second ring in connection with the former were expressive of the feminine gender; and it was Dr. Young who had not only first suggested that the characters in the ring of Ptolemy were phonetic, but had determined, with one very unimportant inaccuracy, the values of four of those which were common to the name of Cleopatra, which was required to be analysed. All the principles involved in the discovery of an alphabet of phonetic hieroglyphics were not only distinctly laid down, but fully exemplified by him; and it only required the further identification of one or two royal names with the rings, which expressed them in hieroglyphics, to extend the alphabet already known sufficiently to bring even names which were not already identified under its operation."

There can be no doubt (as Dr. Peacock justly observes) that one of the principal objects of Young's researches as to the correspondence between the different characters used in the several forms of Egyptian writing, was to identify, if possible, the corresponding hieroglyphical and enchorial characters, sufficiently to

* Certain portions of the hieroglyphical characters are found surrounded by a ring or enclosure, called by the French *cartouches*.

enable him to reconstruct the deficient parts of the first inscription on the Rosetta stone, by replacing the characters in the enchorial text, one by one, by corresponding hieroglyphics. But it was soon evident even to himself that he did not possess the requisite means for carrying on such a work; the solution of a problem which (as Dr. Peacock says) the most learned of Egyptologists would even now regard with no small alarm.

Dr. Young's article "Egypt," in the Supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published in 1819, contains the most comprehensive survey of his labours and conclusions on the subject of hieroglyphic literature up to that date. It does not profess to go into those minutæ of critical detail, for which reference must be made to his numerous other writings on the subject; but as a general and popular view it will always be consulted with advantage. Nevertheless the reader must always bear in mind, that in the statements there given much has to be revised, or even reversed, from the improved disclosures of his later researches.

Next to the Rosetta stone, the most important discovery perhaps was that of the funereal papyri. One of these had long existed (little known) in the museum of Turin; another was discovered by the French expedition to Egypt in the tombs of the kings at Thebes. They both contain pictured representations of funereal ceremonies, and are probably allegorical representations of the conditions of the departed spirit. These are illustrative of the text, which is in hieroglyphics. Dr. Young, by the aid of the principles he had laid down, succeeded in throwing much light on their probable meaning as ritual-books, and in showing that they were probably identical with the sacred books of Hermes or Thoth, mentioned by Diodorus and Clement of Alexandria. In these researches he was followed by Champollion and Lepsius, to whom, nevertheless, Chevalier Bunsen assigns the priority, with scarcely any mention of Young;* which it is matter of equal surprise and regret to observe in a writer occupying deservedly so high a position in the public estimation, whether as to his literary or his personal qualifications.

The more common and well-known funereal manuscripts, so termed from their being found in great numbers encased with the mummies, in nearly all the Egyptian tombs, contain specimens of writing in various stages of that transition (the fact of which Young so emphatically dwelt upon) from the hieroglyphic to the cursive or enchorial character. These, therefore, of course, presented an invaluable source of information, by which the relation of these different modes of writing might be established, and some steps at least secured towards their interpretation.

These papyri were manifestly of very different ages, their

* Life, p. 289.

dates extending probably through a long series of centuries: the comparison of their texts was thus a most interesting and important object. It afforded the means of comparing with each other the different modes of expressing the same ideas at least, if not the same words, in the various characters employed in these several stages of transmutation between the hieroglyphic and the later styles, of identifying equivalent groups or characters, whether the letter were used phonetically or not. The interpretation was, of course, in this case peculiarly assisted by the pictorial embellishments.

The discovery of another important set of papyri by Casati and Grey opened out new views as to the interpretation of the enchorial characters. Champollion and Young were engaged simultaneously in the prosecution of the researches connected with these points, and, in some instances, had opportunities of personal communication with each other. But Champollion enjoyed especial advantages from circumstances which placed some of these documents in his possession, and thus enabled him to take precedence in the publication of results; while his competitor, if he had enjoyed the same facilities, would, no doubt, have been equally competent to perceive the force of the new evidence thus adduced, and equally ready to make use of it, even if setting aside some of his earlier inferences and conjectures.

Dr. Peacock, in reflecting with just severity on Champollion, expresses his regret to find so eminent a writer as Chevalier Bunsen "supporting by the weight of his authority some of the grossest of these misrepresentations."* Some more particular remarks on M. Bunsen had been before given, p. 311, in support of this accusation.

Dr. Young displayed singular modesty and forbearance in his controversy with Champollion, treating him throughout with all the respect due to his acknowledged eminence; and while mildly reproaching him with omitting to give him the due credit for his own share in the research, yet in no way insinuating that any discreditable motive led to the omission.

In fact, Dr. Peacock thinks a far more stringent tone of criticism might have been fairly applied. He takes up the cause of Young with a less scrupulous zeal; and though with perfect good temper, yet with deeply damaging force of argument and statement of facts exposes the very unjustifiable nature of Champollion's pretensions, and vindicates the claims of Young to his fair and important share in these discoveries. Dr. Peacock† especially dwells on the tone of assumption in which Champollion presents himself to his readers as in exclusive possession of a province of which he had long since been the sole conqueror, and regards

* *Life*, p. 337.

† *Ibid.* p. 334.

every question raised as to his exclusive rights as an unjustifiable attack, to be resented and repelled; while he studiously suppresses the *dates* of the successive stages of the discovery, and thus attacks Young on the assertions made on imperfect knowledge in the earlier stages of his investigations, with the aid of all his own accumulated information acquired subsequently; a proceeding the inequitable nature of which needs only stating to stand exposed.

As instances of this, Young, in 1816, on the strength of comparatively imperfect information then acquired, made some representations respecting the enchorial characters in the Rosetta inscription, and their relation to those employed in the funereal rolls. These Champollion criticises and exposes without reserve, from the more full knowledge he had obtained in 1824; entirely passing over Young's own *later* statement on the same subject correcting his former views, and from which Dr. Peacock considers that even Champollion himself probably derived a large portion of his own knowledge of the subject!

Dr. Peacock has collected in one point of view Champollion's main assertions, as representing the state of the case.* He has shown that some of the propositions dwelt upon, were in point of fact *never maintained* by Dr. Young, and that it was chiefly by his later researches that the erroneous impressions at first entertained, respecting the points to which they relate, had been corrected, and their true nature established.

In 1821 Champollion denied altogether the existence of an alphabetic element among the hieroglyphics; but in the following year he adopted the whole of Young's principles, and applied them, with one modification only. The analogy of certain marks in the Chinese hieroglyphics to signify proper names; the principle that the phonetic power of the symbol is derived from the initial letter or syllable of the name of the object which it represents, in the Egyptian language, are among the chief of those which he borrows without acknowledgment, or claims without regard to their prior announcement by Young: "It would be difficult," says Dr. Peacock, "to point out in the history of literature a more flagrant example of disingenuous suppression of the real facts bearing on an important discovery."

The *éloge* of Young by Arago depreciates his merits in regard to the hieroglyphical discoveries in a way which evinces that Arago's known high esteem and regard for him were in this instance superseded by the feeling of national pride, and that he viewed the question between him and Champollion as one between English and French science, in which Arago's strong partialities more naturally than justly enlisted him on the side of his own countryman, and led him to represent the state of the

* *Life*, p. 333.

case most favourably to those pretensions. Dr. Peacock has alluded but briefly to the views of Arago, and towards the conclusion of the chapter sums up the representation of the case as given in the *éloge*, remarking only, that the whole of his previous statements constitute the refutation of it. We will briefly present the main points of Arago's view, which is throughout distinguished by a tone of perfect courtesy towards Young, but which evinces a disposition to assign to him no more than the merit of the first crude conjectures on the subject, leaving it to others to follow out the idea by the necessary substantial proofs.

Arago contends that Young's principle of phonetic interpretation contained a mixture of truth and error: that it was essentially distinguished from that of Champollion in attributing to the hieroglyphical symbols the power of vocalising syllables, and even words, as well as letters: that he left it in a state in which it was not applicable to other names, or capable of determining the correctness of any proposed interpretation of the kind: he further denies that Young had acquired the knowledge of the existence of signs which were homophonous, or the fact that, in some instances, different symbols have the same phonetic force and meaning. All these are pointed out by Dr. Peacock as misrepresentations, upon the evidence adduced in the earlier parts of the chapter, to which it would be impossible, within our limits, to do full justice, since this could only be secured by going minutely into the several statements. On the whole, however, we could wish that something more distinct and condensed had been put forth in reply.

The account of all these researches is illustrated by copious extracts from the correspondence of Dr. Young. As with most men deeply immersed in the details of an intricate subject, his correspondence so wholly refers to minute points of investigation or controversy occupying his attention at the moment, and presuming upon his correspondent's *general* knowledge of the nature of the subject, that the reader not previously versed in the question can gain little insight into the main points of the inquiry;—in the multitude of details he is rather perplexed than enlightened, and is left amid an *embarras des richesses*, very much at a loss to educe out of the varied mass of rich and valuable details, any substantial and connected general conclusions.

In directing attention to Dr. Young's *optical* researches, it may be necessary just to glance at the progress of such inquiries previous to the date of his labours; and we may observe, that up to that period nothing like a connected view of the physical character of this wonderful agent had been attained. A few isolated speculations had indeed been put forth respecting a theory of emitted molecules on the one hand, and of waves in an ethereal

medium on the other, and a few experimental facts bearing on the choice between such hypotheses had been ascertained.

Newton had investigated the periodical alternations of colours in *thin films*, as in soap-bubbles, or the film of air between two glasses pressed together, which he ascribed to alternate dispositions or "fits" in the light to be reflected or not: Hooke had speculated on their being caused by pulsations or waves: Huyghens had investigated the *double refraction* in Iceland spar, and had framed a theory of waves to represent it: Newton opposed this by a theory of molecules with *poles*: Grimaldi had observed coloured *bands* or *fringes* (since called *diffraction*) both on the outside edge and within the shadows of bodies in a very narrow beam of light; and Newton accurately investigated the former kind, which he ascribed to a peculiar *inflexion* of the rays.

Such was briefly the state of physical optics at the time when Dr. Young first entered on the field. The several phenomena of common reflexion and refraction, of double refraction, of inflexion or diffraction, and of the coloured rings, did not seem to be connected by any *common* principle; nor, even separately considered, could it be said that they were very satisfactorily explained. It was now the peculiar distinction of Young to perceive, and to establish in the most incontestable manner, a great principle of the simplest kind, which at once rendered the wave-hypothesis applicable to the two last-named classes of facts, and thus directly connected them with the former: as it has since done for a multitude of other phenomena.

It is not always that we are enabled to trace the first rise and progress of the idea of a great discovery in the inventor's mind. Dr. Young, however, has left on record the progress of the first suggestions which occurred to him on the subject of interference. The first view which presented itself was that of the *analogies* furnished by *sound*, which, as is well known, is conveyed by means of waves propagated in air. And in the case of two sounds differing a very little from the same pitch, produced at the same time, we hear, not a continuous sound, but *beats*, that is, alternations of sound and silence; the waves in the one case conspiring with and reinforcing each other, in the other counter-acting, neutralising, and destroying each other.

But, in more special reference to light, Dr. Young's account of the origin of his ideas is so clear and striking, that we must give it in his own words:

"It was in May 1801 that I discovered by reflecting on the beautiful experiments of Newton a law which appears to me to account for a greater variety of interesting phenomena than any other optical principle that has yet been made known. I shall endeavour to explain

this law by a comparison : Suppose a number of equal waves of water to move upon the surface of a stagnant lake, with a certain constant velocity, and to enter a narrow channel leading out of the lake ; suppose, then, another similar cause to have excited another equal series of waves, which arrive at the same channel with the same velocity and at the same time with the first. Neither series of waves will destroy the other, but their effects will be combined : if they enter the channel in such a manner that the elevations of the one series coincide with those of the other, they must together produce a series of greater joint elevations ; but if the elevations of one series are so situated as to correspond to the depressions of the other, they must exactly fill up those depressions, and the surface of the water must remain smooth : at least I can discover no alternative either from theory or from experiment. Now I maintain that similar effects take place whenever two portions of light are thus mixed ; and this I call the general law of the interference of light.”*

A slight reflection on such an analogy will suffice to generalise it, so as to convey a tolerably exact idea of the case of the *interference* of two rays of light. We have only to imagine in like manner two sets of waves propagated through an ethereal medium and coinciding in direction, when it will be easily apparent that, just as in the case of the supposed canal, they may have their waves either conspiring or counteracting, and consequently giving a point of brightness or darkness accordingly.

This would directly apply to the *thin films*. A ray impinging would be partly reflected at the first surface of the thin film, partly entering it would be reflected internally at its second surface, and emerge coinciding in *direction* with the first, but retarded behind it in its *undulations* either by a whole or a half-undulation, or some multiples of these ; thus combining with the first, and giving either a point of brightness or one of darkness accordingly ; or by some intermediate fraction, giving an intermediate shade. And this would go on alternately at successively greater thicknesses of the film, giving a succession of such points or bands.

If two rays or sets of waves, instead of being exactly superimposed, be supposed to *meet*, inclined at a very acute angle, in a somewhat similar way, they would, across the whole space which the united rays would occupy, alternately conspire, or clash, with each other, thus giving rise to a series of bright and dark points, the assemblage of which would produce bands or stripes on a screen intercepting the rays. Now, as to actual experimental cases, it was in the application of this latter theoretical idea that the invention of Dr. Young was peculiarly displayed. The former case was that alone which seems to have occurred to

* Works, vol. i. p. 202.

Hooke in reference to the colours of thin plates; and even this was in his mind but a very indefinite conception; nor did it seem at first sight readily comparable with such cases as the diffraction-fringes, or still less with the internal bands in a shadow observed by Grimaldi. Young, however, in following out his comprehensive theory to the case last supposed, conceived a community of principle applying to both these as well as to other classes of phenomena.

He repeated and extended Grimaldi's experiment; using narrow slips of card to intercept the ray, in which case dark and bright stripes parallel to the sides internally marked the whole shadow longitudinally, while the external fringes appeared on the outside at each edge.

In theory, originating at the small aperture, a series of waves was propagated onward, till, on reaching the card, they were broken up into two new sets of waves, and spread in circles round each edge as a new centre; while part of the original set continued to pass on at each side. On the principle just mentioned these would *interfere* with the new portions on the outside; and the two new portions would *interfere* with each other in the inside of the shadow; in either case giving stripes or bands. To complete the proof,—when an opaque screen was placed so as to intercept the rays on one side, though abundance of light was present on the other, yet all the internal bands immediately disappeared; demonstrating that the effect was due solely to the *concurrence* of the light from *both* sides.

Young's investigations in fact extended to a number of minor points; we have here merely indicated the leading and essential results: they were also long complicated by various considerations which it required time and experience to show were erroneous or superfluous. But on these we need not dwell.

When the public mind is generally ill-informed on any subject, it is not surprising that any one writer, especially if of some previous reputation, should be able to assert an absolute command over public opinion, whether in favour or in disparagement of a particular invention or a particular investigator of that subject. Such was the case with Dr. Young and his theory of light, which, in his own country, was neglected and disparaged to an extent explicable only from the apathy even of the scientific world, more especially when acted upon by the acrimonious and overbearing censures cast upon that theory, by a critic known to be conversant with the subject, and whose acknowledged powers as a writer gave immense influence to the bitter sarcasms and violent abuse and ridicule with which he assailed the discoveries of Dr. Young and the whole theory of waves. Those who have read the articles alluded to in the *Edinburgh Review* of that date,—well

known to have been the productions of Lord Brougham,—will not be at a loss to comprehend the crushing effect with which they must have acted on a discovery at the time new, unsupported, open to many confessed difficulties, and opposed to the prepossessions of a large portion even of the scientific world.

From the interruption of communication with the continent during the war, it happened that, many years after the date of Young's researches, M. Fresnel, entirely ignorant of what had been done in this country, followed up, independently, the very same investigations; and in a Memoir on Diffraction presented to the Academy of Sciences in 1815, detailed all the same, or similar experiments, leading to the establishment of the same explanation of the phenomena. Fresnel, however, pursued the subject to a greater extent, and carried out the mathematical development by a more elaborate analysis.

In the year 1816 Young's researches first became known to the French savans, on the occasion of a visit made by Arago and Gay-Lussac to England, when they sought the acquaintance of Dr. Young, already known to them by his general reputation, and found him at Worthing, whither he had gone for the summer, where a memorable conversation took place, the account of which we will give in Arago's words :

"In the year 1816 I visited England, accompanied by my scientific friend Gay-Lussac. Fresnel had then just entered on his career of science in the most brilliant manner by his Memoir on Diffraction. This work, which, in our opinion, contained a capital experiment irreconcilable with the Newtonian theory of light, became naturally the first subject of our conversation with Dr. Young. We were surprised at the numerous qualifications which he put upon our commendations of it; when at length he declared that the experiment which we thought so important was to be found published as long ago as 1807 in his lectures on Natural Philosophy. This assertion seemed to us questionable; and a long and minute discussion followed. Mrs. Young was present, but did not take any part in the conversation, as we thought from the fear of being supposed liable to the ridiculous sobriquet of *bas-bleu*, which makes English ladies reserved on such subjects in the presence of strangers. Our want of tact did not strike us until Mrs. Young abruptly quitted the room. We were beginning to apologise to her husband, when she returned with a large 4to volume under her arm. It was the first volume of the *Natural Philosophy*. She placed it on the table, opened the book, without saying a word, at p. 787,*

* We must here notice a trifling inaccuracy into which Dr. Peacock has fallen. The reference given in the above passage to Young's *Natural Philosophy* is stated by Arago correctly, p. 787, as we have copied it. Dr. Peacock has, by some inadvertence, made it p. 387, and thus finds a difficulty in reconciling the narrative with the book. At p. 787 will, however, be found a description referring to a diagram in the plates (fig. 445), which entirely agrees with the description. (*Life of Young*, p. 389.)

and pointed to a diagram where the curvilinear course of the diffracted bands, which was the subject of the discussion, is theoretically established.”*

In a word, the claims of Young were at once recognised by Arago; and by none more freely than by Fresnel himself; and between these two eminent fellow-labourers a correspondence and even intimacy was soon established. They constantly communicated their ideas as new points of investigation pressed on their notice, and each contributed, in some instances, to clear up the difficulties which presented themselves to the other. Yet the announcement of Fresnel's researches excited violent hostility among a considerable section of the savans of the Institute, consisting of devoted adherents to Laplace, who continued to uphold the theory of emission; and this great mathematician in particular used his utmost influence to discourage and suppress the new doctrine.

The fate of the undulatory theory on its first announcement was thus remarkably and similarly unfortunate, from different causes, in England and in France; and considering the very abstract nature of the subject, and how apparently remote it is from any thing which could be supposed to involve the interests or passions of men, it is not less singular to observe the bitterness and acrimony of the hostility which it had to encounter. The British reviewer and the French academician seemed to vie with each other in malignity; and the two great discoverers, Young and Fresnel, were both for a long time destined to the mortification of neglect and discouragement. The only cheering feature was certainly in favour of British science; the several papers of Young, successively communicated to the Royal Society, having been not only printed in its *Transactions*, but also in two instances selected as the Bakerian lectures; a compliment which the council has the power of bestowing annually, from a small bequest, on one of the papers communicated to the Society.

In 1809 Young published an elaborate refutation of Laplace's memoir on double refraction; showing that its laws could be much more satisfactorily explained on the wave system. This may be regarded as the most signal blow directed against the lingering credit of the molecular theory. It stood its ground among the French academicians longer than elsewhere, from the predominant influence of Laplace, who, with an obstinacy which formed part of his character, continued to the last to cling to the doctrine he had so long upheld, in the face of all the new facts and reasonings which were now enlightening the world of science.

It has been well observed, that “simplicity is not always a

* Arago's Biog. Notice of Young, Œuvres, tom. i. p. 292.

fruit of the first growth ;" and accordingly some of the earliest of Young's researches were complicated by unnecessary conditions afterwards easily removed, but which in some instances continued long to embarrass the subject and furnish sources of objection to the wave hypothesis.

One such difficulty for a long time pressed upon the completeness of theory in regard to the explanation of the *thin plates*. According to the law of the thickness, it followed that at the point of actual contact at the centre the rays would be in accordance, and the centre ought to be a point of *brightness*; it is however, in fact, *always black* when the extreme limit is reached. Hence Dr. Young, and those who followed him for a long time afterwards, supposed that in this, as well as in some other cases which seemed analogous, we must suppose *half an undulation* to be by some means *gained* by one ray or *lost* by the other; and this seemed an *arbitrary* or empirical assumption, which the *theory* did not account for. We shall presently see how the difficulty was obviated.

Other cases involving the principle of interference were also investigated by Dr. Young; which are not without a practical bearing. Every one may have remarked the threads of a spider's web occasionally exhibiting brilliant colours in the sunshine. The same thing is seen in fine scratches on the surface of polished metal, and may be artificially produced in several ways. These colours Dr. Young showed were due to *interference* of the portions of light reflected from the sides of the groove, or narrow transparent thread. His attention was also particularly directed to the more complex tints produced when light was transmitted through a texture of fine threads, such as gauze, or even loose fibres of wool, cotton, silk, &c. Here a similar theoretical explanation was found to apply; and when the fibres were tolerably uniformly spread, a bright point of light seen through them appeared surrounded by a halo of coloured rings. The diameters of these rings varied with the *fineness* of the *fibres*; and were theoretically shown to depend on the interference of the portions of light passing through the transparent fibres and the interstices. He was able to show by theory the relation between the *diameters* of the *rings* and the *thickness* of the *fibres*; but the former could be easily measured by an appropriate apparatus of a very simple construction. Hence the diameters of those minute fibres could be immediately determined, and thus differences among them rendered appreciable which were quite imperceptible to the eye. He proposed this practical consideration as likely to be of importance to those interested in estimating the fineness of wool, cotton, &c. for commercial purposes. It does not appear, so far as we know, whether such a method has ever been found prac-

tically available. But we should imagine it could not be undeserving of attention; and in the hands of a person of moderate skill would certainly confer new powers of discrimination in such cases.

The undulatory doctrine, however, was long embarrassed by several objections which it required more extended consideration to remove. Thus, it had long since been remarked by Newton that waves spread round an obstacle, and on the same principle the *rectilinear* propagation of light is a difficulty; light ought to bend round the edges of any intercepting body. But the very principle suggested by Huyghens afforded in some sense an answer; and a fuller examination of the nature and mode of propagation of the waves showed that the oblique and diverging portions will in general interfere with and neutralise each other, so that the main effect will be confined to that part which is in the direct line of the proportion. Young* dwelt much at first on this objection; and afterwards, in a letter to Arago, he renews a similar expression of the difficulties he felt in another point of view: "If light has so great a tendency to diverge into the path of neighbouring rays, and to interfere with them, as Huyghens supposes, I do not see how it escapes being totally extinguished in a very short space, even in the most transparent medium." But the principle just adverted to shows that the middle portion of the light coming from a point of any physical magnitude is not subject to these mutual interferences, and does not diverge, but is perpetually reinforced by the supply of fresh waves incessantly propagated from the original source. In these explanations Young at length expressed his full concurrence in a letter to Fresnel.

The capital discovery of the *polarisation of light by reflection* made by Malus in 1810 formed a remarkable epoch in the history of optical research. The same idea of *sides* or *poles* imagined by Newton seemed to be involved. The reflected ray acquired the same character and properties as each of the rays in the doubly refracting crystal, though their *planes* of *polarisation* are at right angles to each other, and in determinate directions with respect to the crystal. A ray polarised in one plane will neither be transmitted through the crystal nor reflected from glass, when the planes in which they are respectively presented to it are at right angles to its own plane of polarisation. A ray may also be polarised by other methods: by transmission through a number of parallel plates of glass, or through a plate of *tourmaline*, or certain other substances. Hence any of these methods may be used convertibly to test the polarisation of a ray, and the plates or crystals employed are then termed *analysers*.

A particular angle of incidence is necessary to give the maxi-

* Life, p. 140.

mum effect; different for each reflecting substance; and this subject to a law whose subsequent disclosure constituted one of the most beautiful discoveries of Sir D. Brewster, viz. that it takes place at that incidence at which *the refracted ray is perpendicular to the reflected*; or, which is mathematically the same thing otherwise expressed, when the *tangent of the angle of incidence is the index of refraction of the substance*.

Such were some of the leading points successively disclosed; and they soon engaged the attention of Young, as well as Fresnel, who afterwards so largely contributed to the development and extension of them in connection with the doctrine of undulations, of which they were destined to form one of the strongest supports. Yet so little was the value and tendency of Malus' discovery at first perceived, that it was regarded as quite at variance with the wave theory. Young himself went so far as to predict that it was a problem which "would probably long remain to mortify the vanity of an ambitious philosophy, completely unresolved by any theory." Again, in a review of Malus' paper (in 1811), he considers it "conclusive with respect to the *insufficiency* of the undulatory theory in its present state for explaining all the phenomena of light." And, again, in a letter to Sir D. Brewster, five years later, he expresses himself thus: "With respect to my fundamental hypotheses respecting the nature of light (*i. e.* the wave theory), I become less and less fond of dwelling on them, as I learn more and more facts like those which M. Malus discovered; because *though they may not be incompatible with those facts, they certainly give no assistance in explaining them.*" Even Malus himself was at first of opinion that the phenomena of polarisation were equally irreconcilable with both the undulatory and molecular theories; an opinion which he distinctly expressed in a letter to Young.*

Somewhat later, however, we find Young beginning to entertain a more satisfactory view of the case, as appears by the following passage from a letter addressed by him to Arago in 1817:

"I have been reflecting upon the *possibility* of giving an *imperfect* explanation of the affection of light, which constitutes polarisation, without departing from the genuine doctrine of undulations. It is a principle of this theory that all undulations are simply propagated through homogeneous mediums in concentric spherical surfaces, like the undulations of sound, consisting simply of the direct and retrograde motions of their particles in the direction of the radius, with their concomitant condensations and rarefactions. And yet it is possible to explain in this theory *a transverse vibration*, propagated also in the direction of the radius, and with equal velocity, the motions of

* Works, vol. i. p. 248, note.

the particles bearing a certain constant direction with respect to that radius; and this is polarisation."

The conception of *transverse vibrations*, now that the idea has become familiarised, seems to present little difficulty; yet it was at first opposed to the prepossessions even of the most zealous undulationists. Fresnel long hesitated fully to adopt the idea, although admitting it to be the only mode of representing polarisation,—on the ground of being unable to reconcile it with mechanical principles; and this more precisely as to the notion of *transverse vibrations alone* being produced, which constituted this theory in all its simplicity; whereas Young had (as we have just seen) believed both these and *longitudinal vibrations* to co-exist. To establish *this* point, he expressly says, was the main difficulty which embarrassed him.*

This idea of vibrations performed in directions at right angles to the line of the ray received at length its decisive proof from the phenomena of the coloured tints developed in polarised light by the interposition of plates of crystals (such as those of mica, selenite, &c.), when examined by an analyser.

Young ascribed these colours generally to *interference*; but both Fresnel and Arago pointed out that *this* explanation was incomplete. Why did it only take place in *polarised* light, and even then not until the analyser had been applied?

These questions could not be answered until another important law had been established by the joint researches of Fresnel and Arago; and this consisted in the experimental conclusion, that when two rays are, in other respects, in a condition to interfere, but are polarised in planes *at right angles* to each other, they *cannot interfere*: they *can only* do so when polarised in *parallel* planes. Now this result, of necessity, implies that in rays polarised in different planes the vibrations must be executed in different planes; and this involves the admission that the vibrations must be *transverse to the ray*.

This principle was at length seen to complete the explanation so long sought of the polarised tints. The light originally polarised in one plane was, in traversing the doubly refracting crystal, divided into two portions in planes at right angles, which, as Young had shown in regard to position, were in a condition to interfere; (the *ordinary* ray of one such pair coinciding in direction with the extraordinary of some other pair:) were it not that being polarised in these rectangular planes, they could not interfere. It only required, then, the action of the *analyser* to resolve *each* portion into two, suppressing those in one plane, and transmitting those in the other, which, having their vibrations now parallel,

* Ann. de Chimie, 1831, tom. xvii. p. 184.

were thus enabled to manifest their interference, and produce the polarised tints, which in homogeneous light are simply alternations of light and darkness.

Such was the beautiful train of reasoning followed out by Arago and Fresnel to explain those polarised colours, originally and independently discovered by Arago and by Sir D. Brewster, and which, when the crystal is cut perpendicular to its axis, are seen in the form of rings round that axis; and of which the varieties in different crystals are now become familiar by means of the little instrument called the *polariscope*. But the principle of transverse vibrations thus established was the fruitful source of numerous other conclusions.

We have dwelt on the principle involved chiefly as bearing on the difficulties already spoken of, as experienced by Young and Fresnel in the explanation of phenomena with which these last would at first sight not appear to have any connection, but which were now shown to have a direct relation to them. According to the principle of transverse vibrations, as investigated by Fresnel, a number of comprehensive formulas resulted, including the deduction of Brewster's law of the polarising angle, as well as other important consequences.

One of these is the simple consideration, that in reflection, an oblique vibration is resolved into two at right angles, and thus a *change of plane*, or of *angular phase*, takes place. This is equivalent to a *retardation or acceleration in route* by a corresponding portion of a wave length; and if in any case the plane were turned through 180° , the ray would be in an opposite phase, or the change would be equivalent to a difference of one half an undulation. Obvious as now seems the conception, that a change of plane or angular phase is equivalent to retardation or acceleration in length of route, it does not appear to have been distinctly apprehended in the first instance either by Young or Fresnel, or it would have obviated some difficulties which long perplexed them; especially in the remarkable instance before mentioned of the colours of thin plates, the central black spot, and the supposed *arbitrary assumption* of the loss or gain of the half-undulation necessary to explain it.

Although Young, in the very same paper containing his theory of interference, pointed to a mechanical analogy which involved nearly the principle of its explanation, he did not perceive the application of it. Indeed, it can hardly be said to have been very clearly or happily expounded by any of the elementary writers who have systematised the theory, not excepting the author of the biography before us. It is thus less surprising that it should have long continued to furnish a ground of difficulty and objection. Yet in Fresnel's formula a mere change of algebraical *sign*, in the

sine of an angle, in the expression for the reflections at the first and at the second surface, gives a difference of 180° in phase, which is thus accounted for without any subsidiary assumption whatever.

We have thus far endeavoured briefly to sketch the leading points in the history of the first establishment of those grand principles of the theory of light, which Young has the undivided and unquestioned honour of having been the first to propose and to demonstrate. Every subsequent improvement and enlargement of the theory, which has regularly kept pace with the advance of experimental discovery, has, as it were, grown out of the simple principles at first laid down by a natural sequence, without any new hypotheses or forced and arbitrary changes. It is a theory of which an eminent philosopher, by no means unduly biased in its favour, and at a time when it had not reached its present point of perfection, emphatically said, "It is a series of felicities; and if not true, eminently deserves to be true." And the increasing proof which it continues to receive by its readiness in meeting nearly every new experimental case as it arises, augments in the same proportion our conviction that it will, sooner or later, be equally successful in the solution of those few phenomena which still appear to stand out as exceptional instances to its application.

ART. IV.—ATHEISM.

The First Cause; or, a Treatise upon the Being and Attributes of God. By Rev. J. C. Whish, M.A. Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday. 1855.

The Burnett Prize-Essays.

Principles of Psychology. By Herbert Spencer. Longmans. 1855.

George Jacob Holyoake and Modern Atheism. An Essay. By S. D. Collet. Trübner. 1855.

The Reasoner for 1855. Edited by G. J. Holyoake. Holyoake, Fleet Street.

IF ever the dark shadow of Atheism were suddenly to envelop the earth, would the crash of falling churches, the disbanding of ecclesiastical classes, and the vanishing of all conscious individual intercourse with God, be necessarily accompanied by the yielding of all moral ties and the dissolution of every sacred social organisation? Before we can attempt to answer such a question, we must call to mind a very obvious but a strangely-forgotten truth, that

human trust does not create God, and that human distrust would not annihilate Him. There is a thoroughly atheistic way of shuddering over Atheism, which is apt to express itself as if the spread of human disbelief would not only overcloud but *empty* Heaven. Although the darkness which we have supposed would hide God from us, it would not hide us from God; nor should we ever be beyond the reach of His moral influence. When people assume that an atheist *must* "live without God in the world," they assume what is fatal to their own Theism. We deeply believe that by far the greater part of all human trust does not arise, as is commonly supposed, from our seeking God, but from God's seeking us; and this, too, without *any* clear admission or confession on our part of His influence upon us;—that a great deal of it is trust in *goodness* rather than in any personal God, and might *possibly* be held along with intellectual disbelief of His personal existence; in short, that if you could blot out on the one hand all acts of *self-confessed* trust in God,—if you could blot out all private and public *worship*, properly so called, spurious or genuine, all churches, all creeds, all pharisaism, and all pure conscious devotion; and if, on the other hand, you might leave all this, and blot out of the earth all unconscious and unconfessed acts of surrender to the divine influence in the heart,—all that *might* possibly be connected with purely intellectual Atheism,—you would blot out more of true "religion," more of that which "binds together" human society, more of God's true agency on the earth, in the latter case than in the former. Of course we do not mean that the truest unconscious trust in God's influence is not generally to be found in the same minds which, *at other times*, also consciously confess Him; but only this, that if in every life, whether of faith or doubt, you numbered up the acts of trust which are not rendered to God *personally*, but to the instincts and impulses which so often represent Him in the heart, and which might continue to represent Him even when the dark cloud of conscious doubt of His existence had intervened, you would probably have numbered far more acts which really originate in divine influence than could possibly be found animated by a real conscious personal belief.

And if this be so, as we believe most men will admit as much from self-knowledge as from knowledge of the world, it is a fatal blunder to attempt to prove to the atheist that, in consequence of his doubt, he has been and is living totally without God; that his eyes need opening, not in order that they may recognise One who has been ever with him, but that they may help him to find a distant and alienated power. There is no teaching more mischievous in its effects than that which makes human belief in God

the *first* regenerating power in human society, and God Himself the second ; which makes God's blessing a consequence of man's confession, and which therefore limits that blessing to the narrow bounds of the confession. In fact, this delusion tends to depress rather than to exaggerate ordinary men's real estimate of the value of faith. Hearing it constantly implied that God influences men's hearts only so far as they *confess* His influence, that He will do nothing for them, morally and spiritually, unless they render the "glory" where it is due ; and yet, seeing that *in fact* this *sine quâ non* of divine influence is any thing but a true mark of actual goodness, being often only the crowning element in evil,—a school of thought has sprung up which depreciates the value of faith altogether, which delights in discovering that the greatest good is, after all, to be found hidden under a mask of scepticism and self-mockery, in short, a school which replaces the religious ascription of all goodness to God's grace by light ridicule of a human nature that does not pretend to be so assisted, but rather does the best it can for itself in an unostentatious way. This disposition to compare keen self-mockery with formal belief, and to give the preference to the former, is perceptible enough in the whole tone of our literature. Thackeray's writings are throughout tinged with the feeling that thorough self-distrust is one of the highest moral virtues of which men in general are capable. And until even this honest self-exposure, and every other sort of goodness, so far as it is goodness, be shown to be attributable to God's Spirit working in man, far though it be removed from the theological virtue of faith, faith itself will never recover from the discredit into which its undue isolation has brought it. As soon as God is confessed to be far greater than our faith, we shall begin to make the effort to render our faith more worthy of God : but while men own so many things to be noble which are never claimed as divine because they are unaccompanied by this conscious faith, so long they will care little what that faith does or does not include. Men have found the faith-classification of human actions so narrow and unjust, they have seen so much goodness without faith, and so much faith without goodness, that they begin to preach justification by *sincerity* as a more human, if it is not a more divine formula than justification by faith.

In showing, then, that Atheism is false to human nature, that trust in God is the natural atmosphere of our moral life, we must not take for granted, as is so often done, that belief in God as God, and belief in goodness, are one and the same thing. We must grant the atheist his unexplained impulses to good, the *implicit* God of his conscience, and show how he mutilates and dwarfs human nature by denying it all explained impulses

to good, the explicit God of faith. Though guarding against the error that an *acknowledgment* of God must accompany all virtual obedience to His word, it is of course manifest that, so far as human action is self-conscious as well as voluntary, blindness to God's existence must entail a large and constant loss upon the blind. Although other and deeper springs of divine influence be not closed, although there may be yet (except in the cases in which intellectual atheism is the dullness produced by moral atheism) far more effectual means of inward guidance still accessible to God's providence than those which any deadness of insight can obstruct,—yet all the tone of the reflective life must be greatly changed by the exclusion of this great object from the field of the inward vision. Not to see what exists must of course modify constantly the whole range of action and thought which has a real (though in this case unperceived) reference to that existence. As our ancestors, who did not know that air had weight, reaped unconsciously *most* of the benefits of the all-permeating atmospheric pressure, but of course lost that which depended on the actual recognition and conscious use of its weight, so those who do not know that God is, while they experience, as much as any, most of the blessing of His existence and His character, *cannot* have the blessing which arises only from a knowledge and conscious account of the fact of that existence and character; and therefore it is, we believe, that, in proportion as mental culture increases the horizon of man's experience, and reduces more and more of his life beneath the eye of his thought, is the moral loss serious and deep which arises from this mental blindness. Those who have but little inward life, whose busy routine of occupation, or natural one-sidedness of character, leaves room only for a narrow moral horizon, suffer indeed and bitterly from blindness to the only great and tranquillising reality of life, but not at all in the same proportion as those whose whole nature is awake and sensitive to human emotions, without including the belief in God. Of all merely intellectual atheisms, hard material atheisms betray *least* strikingly and painfully the absence of the power of faith. There are so many *natural* obstructions in such minds to the propagation of religious conviction throughout the whole nature, that its absence is not striking; there would be so many clouds as to hide the sun even if it were up. But thoroughly cultivated and refined atheisms are always intensely startling and painful, like the blotting of the sun out of a clear sky. The actual loss is greater; proportionally far more of God's influence would *naturally* come through conscious channels with the cultivated than with the uncultivated man; proportionally less strength and warmth can be received unconsciously from "behind the veil."

Let us first of all look steadily at the startling fact which meets us on the threshold of this question—the fact, namely, that it is so much as *possible* for a sincere truth-loving mind to doubt of God's existence—that the greatest of all realities appears so frequently, in the history of nations as well as in individual life, rather in the shape of a whispered haunting suggestion than as an unveiled illumined truth. Can any answer be found to the argument: "You tell us that this faith is the *one* pure spring of all the *conscious* purity and strength to which human nature has access. Why, then, is it at best a faith, and not a conspicuous fact? Why can it *ever*, even for a time, be inaccessible to eager search? And why, when attained, does it still linger in the background of your mind, as it were, being usually, even to yourselves, more audible than heard?" The common and dreary answer is, of course, the mists of human corruption. But it seems strange that the very remedy which is to heal the blindness should be applicable only when the blindness is already healed. We deeply believe, too, that this question is not explicable by the doctrine of Dr. Newman and others that trust is made a kind of probationary venture of the will—a courageous *risk* of ourselves by a dim twilight—in order to test whether we would not rather serve even a *probable* God than a *certain* self-love. We do not deny that we ought to do so, if it were possible for Him thus to experimentalise upon us; but it seems to us that it is a most unworthy representation of the divine character to represent Him as tempting us by self-concealment. Probably the account which most true men would give to themselves of the mystery is this: that while faith fosters, sight must arrest, the growth of a moral nature constituted like ours,—nay, that there may even be peculiar stages of individual and social life when the absence of faith alleviates instead of aggravating the pressure of moral evil. We believe that a constant *vision* of God would be an injury to almost all men,—that there are periods when even utter scepticism is the sign of God's mercy, and the necessary condition of moral restoration. We believe a real *independent* moral growth would be impossible to natures that had not been shaded, as it were, by a special veil from the overwhelming brightness of a divine character ever present with us. Either every thing human must have been changed, so as to make us impervious to personal influences, or there must be a special film to screen from our sensitive passive nature, at least during the growth of our character, the intense impressions emanating from any spiritual beings greatly superior to ourselves. Every one knows that, even amongst men, a powerful massive character, though it be nearly perfect, often positively *injures* those within the circle of its influence. They lose the

spring of their mind beneath the overwhelming weight of its constant pressure. They are crushed into an unconscious mechanical consonance with all its ways. Nay, even affection, not pressure, may do the same thing. Moral preference, moral freedom, moral character, may be superseded altogether by the single unanalysed predominance of another's *wish*. This it was probably which rendered the removal of Christ the first condition of the moral life of the apostles. "It is expedient for you that I go away." In the case supposed we should lose the power of growing up to be "fellow-workers" with God from mere unmoral captivity to His infinite influence. Faith means the discernment of His character without subjugation of the small finite personality to the infinite life. To exchange faith for sight on earth, would be to exchange Theism for Pantheism—moral education for moral absorption. Again, we think it true, for an inverse reason, that there are stages in human culture when even utter scepticism may be a divine remedy for moral evil. When civilisation has become corrupt, and men are living consciously below their faith, we believe that it is in mercy that God strikes the nations with blindness,—that the only hope of remedy lies in thus taking away an influence they resist, and leaving them to learn the stern lesson of helpless self-dependence. The shock of a lost faith often restores sooner than the reproach of a neglected faith. Nay, often before any real faith can be attained at all, scepticism may be, we believe, a discipline of mind and heart, given not in retribution but in love. The painful groping of an uncertain footing amidst immortal wants and affections is often the only means by which, as far as we can see, we could have our eyes opened at once to their infinite truth and to our own responsibility.

It is in *growing* characters, maturing in the culture of all the finer elements, as well as in mere intellect, that scepticism seems most evil in its influences—characters needing the genial influence of trust, and yet held fast in some of the many intellectual traps of human speculation. In other cases it cannot be regarded as unmixed evil. But, as we have said, in refined and cultured minds there is, we believe, no influence that can secure constant progress apart from personal trust; and long-continued doubt, whether arising from personal unfaithfulness or from evil influence, must in the end ossify the higher parts of the mind and distort the whole.

What, then, is the atheistic type of character? In other words, what is the type of character which a fully realised disbelief in the existence and influence over us of any spiritual nature higher than our own (however faithfully our own may be accepted and trusted) *tends* to produce? Vividly to see the import of Atheism to human character, even though it be *not* moral

Atheism (or disbelief in ultimate moral distinctions), is the first step towards its disproof.

It is clear that Atheism necessarily tends relatively to reduce the influence and independence of the higher intellectual and moral faculties (even where the real existence of these is not disputed), as compared with that of the senses, social impulses, and those energies which tell upon the world. And this it does both involuntarily and unconsciously, by eradicating from the imagination that haunting image of the divine character which most stimulates these faculties into action, and also voluntarily and consciously, because the atheist must in consistency believe that the theist's worship gives them an unfair prominence. Holding that the human mind is in *direct* contact with no other mind, but is the latest and highest consummation of forces pushing upwards from a lower stage of existence, the atheist cannot regard his own highest mental states—conscience, affection, and so forth—as having any independent illumination of their own,—as skylights opened to let in upon human nature an infinite dawn from above,—but rather as a polished arch or dome completing and reflecting the whole edifice beneath. To him the highest point of *human* culture is the absolutely highest point in the mental universe; mere non-existence roofs us in beyond; and of course, therefore, the highest faculties we possess must derive their sole validity and their sole meaning from the lower nature to which they add the finishing touch. No doubt he will admit that new power and insight is gained, the higher self-culture is pushed; but the new power is not power from beyond human nature, the new insight is not insight into a region above it; it is only the stronger grasp of a more practised hand, the keener vision of a more comprehensive survey. Hence, by dismissing the faith in God, Atheism necessarily props up the higher faculties of man completely and solely on the lower organisation, and denies them any independent spring. Moreover, the atheist is led to justify and fortify himself in this natural result of his modes of thought by assuming, as Feuerbach does, that the object of man's worship, if there be any, ought to be a perfect *man*, and that the theist's God is not even strictly a magnified shadow of humanity, but only of a special and arbitrarily selected *portion* of humanity. This kind of worship, therefore, gives, he maintains, a factitious and disproportionate influence to certain so-called "higher parts" of human nature. An injurious and morbid reduplication is given, he thinks, to the faculties called moral and spiritual by this rapt attention to a fanciful religious echo of them, while the physical organisation and common-sense understanding are left to assert themselves. And so the atheist, denying any special or original sources of life for the highest part of man's

nature, sets it to take lessons from the lower, and look down instead of looking up. Hence, we believe, Atheism is far more uncomfortably and *consciously* alive to the material conditions under which it works, and the physiological laws it so anxiously consults, than would be the case if man had no moral nature at all. There is the same kind of *soreness* in the alliance between it and the physical nature, under this levelling theory, that there usually is between essentially different ranks, where the higher is induced by some theoretic conviction to disavow its special birthright.

Again, atheistic theory in one still more important respect diminishes the influence that must be given to the moral nature of man. It necessarily regards good and evil as ideas attained and attainable only by human capacity,—as depending on natural genius and insight only,—as wholly limited by natural disposition. Hence not seeing in them any movement of a living character towards us, but only an exercise of human capacity,—cases of moral difficulty are apt to be given up or slurred over as insoluble, which the theist feels *must* be and are capable of solution, if he can only trustfully follow, step by step, and without impatience, the gradual indications of God's purposes. There is all the difference in the world between the view of right and wrong which treats it as a mathematical problem which a man can solve or not, according to his capacity, and the view of it as something which depends on the faithfulness of a personal relation—something *certain* to become clearer and clearer, not through our capacity, but through the free illuminating power of another's influence, if we use the dim light we have in *beginning* to go where it leads. Right and wrong are usually considered as extremely simple to see—difficult only to do. This is very false, however, especially when weakness and sin have already complicated human relations. And at this point the atheistic and theistic views of conduct necessarily become essentially different in the relative importance they assign to moral instincts. Neither atheist nor theist can see any thing but thick darkness, perhaps, and both are utterly incompetent to find their own way to the light. But the atheist has only his own powers to trust; and, finding them shackled and paralysed by a thousand chains, can only despair, and find no help in the flickering conscience, which only seems to mock the gloom. The theist, if he can still believe in the infinite love of God, can trust implicitly that every step into the darkness will be into a darkness less complete, and show the way to the step beyond. Hence he can never believe but that right is *attainable*, if he will follow on; that the little insight he has must be implicitly obeyed, and not thrown away because it seems utterly inadequate to his need. If you don't

believe that "good" is *living and free*—that it is a *person*—you cannot believe that it will find *you* out; and you may be truly as incompetent to find *it* out as to leave the earth for the sun.

And just in the same way as the absence of trust tends to nourish a despondency in deep moral difficulty, and a neglect of the inadequate faculty we *have*, in the case of the individual,—so it is also fatal to the healthy progress of nations. The atheist says, "Even you admit that God only helps those who help themselves. Well, we help ourselves, and therefore God, if He exists, helps us; if He does not, we have all the help we can. *Science* is the true providence of man. We lay no faith on 'personal god;' we use our own faculties." Very well; but let men only realise your negative creed, and you will find they have not the heart, or perhaps the temerity, on great occasions, to help themselves any longer. *Trust* is the postulate of the capacity to help ourselves in any great or noble work. It becomes *impossible* to do our part bravely without this perfect reliance in the co-operation of God. What is to justify trust in a mere sudden gleam of light,—a streak just flashing over a universe at midnight,—except the conviction that it comes from One who will send more and more, as the occasion demands, if that be followed? Luther's intense saying, "We tell our Lord God plainly, that if He will have His church, He must look after it Himself. We cannot sustain it; and if we could, we should become the proudest asses under heaven," is the inspiration of *all* great action. No man dares to follow a gleam of conviction which tends to overturn a world, unless he is sure that he is but the interpreter of a Power who gave him that conviction, and can guard it after His interpreter is gone. Luther took no responsibility in the case, except the responsibility of his own individual life. How could he have done what he did with a sense of the uncertain fate of Europe, when the Roman Church should be gone, resting on his individual conscience? A small anxiety oppresses a man, if it be only his own uncertain judgment that he trusts. Paul was insupportably anxious about the measures he took to defend himself from Corinthian ill-will. Luther was depressed into a state of chronic melancholy by the difficulties of marriage-questions referred to his ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Yet Paul snapped the chain which bound Christianity to the formal Judaism with the serenest equanimity; and Luther was never so calm and loftily certain as in the act which rent Christendom and cut history in two. If there is no one else who has looked into the future for you, and distinctly told you how to act, then you are bound to look into the future yourself, and take the awful possibilities you initiate upon

your own shoulders. Who could do this, on great or small occasions, without a paralysing dread? Atheism tends to make men and nations anxious, timid, hesitating, disinclined to place any ample confidence even in such moral insight as they have.

And further, Atheism shakes the authority of the moral faculties of man, by doing away with all adequate means of *expressing* the infinite distinction between right and wrong. Neither admitting that right action opens human eyes to a vision of Infinite Holiness, nor that it survives for ever in the immortal life it assists to build up,—Atheism has no language by which it can express the infinite nature of moral distinctions. Right and wrong, like all other qualities of human life, can only be expressed in finite terms,—can only be symbolised by objects which are immediately swept away by the drift of time,—which are mere invisible points in the infinite universe of space. The atheist has no infinite calculus applicable to human actions. He may say, indeed, that considerations of right and wrong differ from all others in their imperativeness, but he cannot believe that any infinite result in any way attends moral choice more than any other act of finite life. Why should the aged be so anxious about the regulation of their hearts, for example? It may be absolutely right; but how should we single out a *right* action as totally distinct from all others of certainly trivial and temporary nature? It affects no external life; it will almost immediately cease to affect any internal life. As is one act, so is another. All alike are temporary—all alike limited. Immortality—the communion with God—these are the only living expressions which the struggling nature of man, intensely conscious of the infinite character of duty and sin, can give to that infinitude. It is not, as is falsely said, that right and wrong take their distinctions from measures of duration, or from the arbitrary word of God; but that faith in infinite personal life, and in communion with, or separation from Infinite Good, is the only articulate utterance which our conscience can find for its sense of the absolutely *boundless* significance it sees in every moral choice. A rejection of these realities must react on the conscience itself, and force it to resign its “absolute and infinite” distinctions.

Again, a fully realised Atheism will undermine the worth of personal human affections; not merely indirectly, by losing sight of immortality, but still more directly by cutting off the chief spring of their spiritual life. If that fine wide-spreading network—hidden from all human eyes—the winding, crossing, blending, diverging threads of human affection which hold together human society, be indeed conceived as issuing every where out of everlasting night,—as spun, snapped asunder, and again repaired by the mere automatic operation of Nature’s unconscious and

impersonal energy,—the personal affections lose quite the richest and most permanent of the *conscious* influences at least which minister to their life and growth. If we cease to believe in the infinite spiritual *presence* mediating between mind and mind, and try to expel that conception from our thoughts, we must become more and more completely dependent for the growth of the higher human ties on the conditions of physical intercourse. The awkward and constrained intercourse of human beings, so rarely interchanging the real secrets of the heart, and often most frigid when covering the intensest life, is not adequate to sustain the growth of deep affections. It supplies the *occasions*, not the sources of that growth. If there be no Eternal Depository of our resolves and fears, and hopes and trusts, there is little new moral strength consciously poured into these higher human relations at all. He who supposes that his nature can never be directly addressed from the spiritual side at all—that it remains rooted in unconscious energies—may indeed *indulge* passive emotion, when it arises spontaneously within him,—nay, may entertain and welcome it; but he cannot regard affection as claiming constant *service* from him, even where it has no external duty,—as a *trust* which he is bound to reverence; he cannot feel it matter of self-reproach if he grow cold; it is to him no withdrawal of a voluntary gift; it cannot be regarded as a personal and moral matter at all; it is the ceasing of that which he did not cause; it is the subsiding of a strange wave of feeling; he has no passionate dream that God is taking away that which was not treasured,—and that, even now, higher self-sacrifice, truer devotion, would bring back the receding tide. It *was* no trust, no trial; its loss therefore *is* no sign of censure or of failure. It is gone back out of the heart whence it came; and that is but a fiction which would make it appear a result of moral conduct on our part,—an expression of the character of a vigilant God. The atheistic theory thus tends to reduce the life of human affection to a close dependence on the *visible* moral relations between man and man. It leaves some sense of responsibility towards the living and present object of affection, but it cancels all idea of moral responsibility to the Inspirer of affection. It would tend to make us measure the self-sacrifice *due* from us by the self-sacrifice *deserved* by others, instead of measuring it by the eternal purposes and the immeasurable love of God. It destroys in this way the fulcrum on which human affection is sustained; for while we may *feel* the claim of another upon us, yet to hear it selfishly advanced is utterly destructive of its power;—only the great Mediator between the severed minds of men can revive the fading sense of duty, and melt the mind into bitter memory, without further estranging the rebellious heart; and if

no such Mediator be recognised, all *conscious* seeking of His influence or submission to His promptings is of course impossible. All the promises, the prayers, the self-reproaches, the resolves which *assume* a providential origin and voluntary divine influence for our spirits, are rendered impossible, and Atheism thus itself clips the life of human affection down to the *mortal* type which atheistic theory assigns to it. Of course theists are in this respect often practical atheists, and atheists may unconsciously treat as a moral trust and result of providential government that which their theory should represent as an involuntary, inevitable event. But just so far as the conscious life influences us at all, just so far theoretic Atheism dries up the sources of personal affection, by sweeping away that searching moral relation to the Inspirer of affection in which, even far more than in its relation to human objects, its safety and strength consist. The best and purest part of conscious self-sacrifice and devotion is not that which passes directly between men, but that which goes round by God, and is sifted and purified in the very act of submission to His eye. If you sweep this away, there is no little danger of falling back into the jealous, exigent, selfish type of affection which at best weighs out with scrupulous care the exact debt. Moreover, there is nothing more *narrowing* to the character than even true human love devoid of a deep faith. Its very nobleness, being without trust, tyrannises over the mind, and would take the place of Providence in anxious guarding against fate. The atheist can scarcely admit any claim higher than a strong personal affection, since he believes that no *better* being is claiming his service, and that no immortality can ever repair the final evil of separation. Yet the very narrow anxiety that would thus supplant a hopeful trust, and limit the aims and activity of man to cheat separation a little longer of its pain, is apt to foil its own end, and cool the affection which thus unnaturally limits the range of life. Once realise Atheism, and it will soon appear that affection must waste itself away without that separate life of responsibility to its Inspirer which it does not acknowledge; and further, if that could be otherwise, that it would soon eat into the healthy active energy of man, if it had no Infinite Love to *trust*, while it had a certain impending fate to *fear*.

But turning now from this tendency in Atheism to impair the authority of the moral faculties and the worth of the personal affections, let us consider how far it affects the worth of that one great idea for the sake of which it considers all these sacrifices as nothing. If God be dislodged from our thoughts, will *Truth* cover a wider area, and gain a deeper significance? Will it spread itself over that world of thought from which the image of

God is banished, absorb into itself the sacred attributes with which theists invest Him, and supply any thing analogous to the softening influence of personal reverence? Clear the mind of God, and truth is reduced almost to mere knowledge—true “*information*.” The aggregate of the actual and *temporary* relations between the short-lived intelligent beings, the animals, the plants, the stones, the forces, which are thrown together in more or less permanent connection in this big round and rather empty sphere of space, would then constitute Truth. The *highest* truth would be the account of observed and quite *momentary* influences of human minds upon each other, such as the relation of the vestiges of Shakespeare’s mind to the quickly vanishing generations of his successors,—in short, the momentary relations of minds ceasing to have relations to *any thing* in a few brief years. The most *permanent* truth would be the *lowest*,—facts about cohesion, gravity, and mineral life. Nay, suppose that—what is quite possible—physical science discovers some gradual destructive agency, which would, in the course of years, remove man wholly from that universe in which for a few centuries he has managed to live in curious wondering contemplation of the irrational silence around him. This law, when discovered, would itself be a part of this “sacred” truth which Atheism worships in the place of God. It would be the widest, and to us the most important generalisation of actual fact hitherto attained. The knowledge that a time was coming when the law of gravitation (or perhaps not even that) shall be left in undisputed possession of the limitless blue spaces, and when there would not even be any one any where to *know* that the “eternal truth” of nothingness had survived its evangelists,—this knowledge, we say, if it were attainable, should be “sacred” to the minds of the discoverers, if, at least, it is to *bare fact*, as such, that sacredness belongs—if it depends only on the *certainty* of the fact announced, and not in any way on the *quality* of that fact—*i. e.* on the kind and number of the influences it puts forth over our nature. With the theist, “THE TRUTH,” as distinguished from *mere* reality, signifies the whole mass of eternal *personal* influences which he believes to bind together God with man, and man with man through God. It is therefore “sacred” to him as affecting the highest life of man, and as affecting that life eternally. But blot out this eternal spiritual centre of creation, and what is left for truth to include except a *rationale* of relations of which the *least* human are then believed to be the *most* permanent, and the highest of all are not only almost momentary for individual men, but perhaps quite transient for the race itself? If we believe in no Immutable Reality, truth itself must change with history, and at best is nothing more than a rough

computation of the law of change. To tell how human lives influence each other for the present, and are likely to influence each other while things go on in the main as they do now,—and how they stand related to the rocks, and the ocean, and the lightning, and the world of plants and animals,—this is the highest import of “truth” to the atheist’s mind. The man who could resolutely keep down his conception of “truth” to this standard would scarcely feel it very sacred, or worthy of much costly sacrifice. It is the ever-retreating horizon of an eternal life, and faith in the inexhaustibly fresh possibilities of every opening relation between character and character, and awe at the new insight into our dependence on God, which unconsciously or consciously gives its fascination and sacredness to the search after “truth.” The tendency of Atheism is to lower this feeling into mere curiosity craving “information.”

We have thus sketched the main features of the character which Atheism, fully realised, would tend to generate in an *awakened* moral nature. We have attempted to show that it would tend to weaken and even shatter the authority of conscience, to sow despondency in the heart both as to personal and human progress, to reduce personal affection to a narrow and selfish type, and to exorcise all the fascination and grandeur in the conception of truth. Still, the atheist may reply that even if he admit all this, it only goes to prove that the existence of God is *desirable*—not that it is real; that men would benefit by believing in Him, if they could see ground to believe in Him. As Mr. Holyoake insists, human wants and wishes must not be allowed to create a delusion for their own satisfaction. “Presentiments” must not be regarded as “proofs of external existence.” Yet we apprehend that human nature is so constituted, that being once convinced of the deteriorating influence of Atheism, it would feel an overwhelming conviction that Atheism is untrue. If once convinced that *trust* is the natural and necessary atmosphere of the *highest* culture, no one would easily be persuaded that such culture was unattainable except at the cost of believing in a phantasm. For though genuine and thorough Atheism need not shrink from the assertion that man could make for himself in imagination a much more successful and much nobler world than is attainable in fact, yet this is exactly the point at which atheists show that they are really above their opinions. Where is the atheist who does not profess Atheism expressly because he persuades himself that it gives the *highest* and freest play to human nature? Yet, in assuming this, he assumes that truth must be (morally) *best* for the mind, and that therefore whatever is morally best for the mind is true. Thorough Atheism might consistently enough assert, if it admitted ultimate and inex-

plicable moral distinctions at all, that belief in some fictions would produce a higher cast of mind than bare reality. Yet such Atheism is indeed rare, and usually abandons all belief in a moral "better and worse," rather than admit this.

We are not attempting to *prove* the existence of God. We firmly believe that God alone can finally convince any man of His own existence. But it is possible to point out the lines of ascertained fact which converge on this truth. It is possible to *prepare* men's minds for the discernment of the truth,—to point out the directions in which it may be most clearly seen. One of the most important of these we have already tried to indicate. There is, however, a vague, general dread that Science, if fairly faced, is atheistic in its tendency. Men are haunted with a phantom of a power that they dare not challenge, which is rumoured to have superseded and exposed natural theology, and to be gradually withdrawing, with inexorable hand, every fold of mystery from the universe, without disclosing any trace of the everlasting God. So far are we from believing this to be true, that we are satisfied there is striking indication of the fundamental necessity of Theism in the incredible incoherence of texture which Science, as a whole, presents to the thought without the theistic nexus. On every side alike—in the absence of this ground-faith—analysis unravels the component threads of reality, but dissipates, by some strange sleight of hand, the living force that wove them, and leaves us at last with a so-called "equivalent" for concrete fact, which, like dry colours scraped off a picture, has indeed been fetched out of actual existence, but which no power could ever constitute into it again.

The object of all science is said truly to be the attainment of unity. But unity is an ambiguous word; and there are two ideas concerning scientific unity in vogue, one of which is synonymous with *generality* or high abstraction, the other with the idea of a real tie or bond. The one notion of unity is derived from each *single* science, and is related to concrete fact exactly as universal truths are related to particular cases. Here the unity is really the unit of which the individual elements are fractions; there is no uniting, because there is no possibility of real separation even in thought. The special cases *constitute* the abstract whole; they cannot be *bound up* together, because they are only different aspects of the same thought. The other notion of unity is derived not from *single* sciences, but from the conjunction of *many*, and signifies the *vinculum*, or sheath, under which branches of thought or existence, really different in kind, are taken up into a single complex root or stem. In the former case the unity and the variety are both purely formal, and the tie or bond is metaphorical; in the latter case the unity is real—

holding together positively divergent thoughts, or distinct forms of existence. Now Science, properly regarded, aims, we believe, at reaching both these kinds of unity,—each in its right place. In each single science it aims at generalising the particular cases into the abstract formula which includes them all—at getting back to the fundamental conception of the science from studying to comprehend all its phenomena in one law. But true *universal* science does not attempt to ignore real differences of *kind* between the special phenomena of its various branches; and therefore it aims not at falsely identifying radical distinctions, but at finding out how they may be really united without being confounded.

The real unity, then, at which true science aims is unity of conception. Where it can identify apparent varieties as mere modifications of one and the same conception, it does so, and creates a science. When, on the other hand, it can make the universe *conceivable to us* only by admitting, to the full, specific and ultimate differences of *kind* in its phenomena, it admits those differences, and studies to find a higher unity, not by further generalising, but by looking for a uniting *power*. The only test we have of the truth of scientific hypothesis is the degree of power it gives us in *representing to ourselves* at will the facts of the universe without distinct individual study of each. Hence nothing is less scientific than any hypothesis which tries to run one set of facts into another without justification, in order to evade the admission of a distinct root. Instead of increasing our power of representing the universe, such a procedure confuses and disturbs it. Why was Copernican astronomy preferred to the old Ptolemaic astronomy? First, because it rendered the mental representation of the facts studied simpler than before; next and most, because it suggested new and true representations of relations not hitherto represented to the mind at all. It was one step towards a justification, to find that we could conceive as simple relations what had hitherto been conceived as most complex relations; but when that mode of conceiving the planets' motions suggested modes of including quite other relations (such as the motion of bodies on the earth's surface) in the same thought,—that is, not only simplified what had before been reduced to definite conceptions, but reduced other facts within the scope of the same definite conceptions,—the thing was regarded as certainly established. Of course it could not be *proved*. No one can see what force keeps the earth in her orbit, or the moon in her's, or what draws the stone to the ground. It is still quite *conceivable* that no such forces exist at all, but quite different and far more complicated forces, producing the same effects. But the belief in the new astronomy is grounded on the assump-

tion that whatever hypothesis gives our reason the widest power of representing actual fact, gives us that power just because it is the reflected image of actual fact. For instance, why do scientific men daily attach more and more credit to the wave-theory of light, and less and less (we believe) to the atom-theory of matter? Simply because the former not only enables them to represent all that is hitherto known, but daily increases their power of representing to themselves hitherto unknown relations of light and colour. It is a *working* hypothesis, opening up ever new explanations of relations hitherto more or less outlying and unattached. The latter (the atom-theory) has, on the other hand, never represented any thing but the combining proportions of chemical substances, and is a mere arbitrary form of that. It is a dead addition to the law of combining proportions,—needless to it, suggesting nothing beyond it. All science, then, aims at enabling us to represent fact more and more completely to our own minds. It takes accurate representative power as its best test of reality. Hence any attempt to merge the *distinctive* characteristic of a higher science in a lower—of chemical changes in mechanical—of physiological in chemical—above all, of mental changes in physiological—is a neglect of the radical assumption of all science, because it is an attempt to deduce representations—or rather misrepresentations—of one kind of phenomena from conceptions of another kind which do not contain it, and must have it implicitly and illicitly smuggled into them before it can be extracted out of them. Hence, instead of increasing our power of representing the universe to ourselves without the detailed examination of particulars, such a procedure leads to misconstructions of fact on the basis of an imported theory, and generally ends in forcibly *perverting* the least-known science to the type of the better known.

These remarks apply almost *necessarily* to any view of science that excludes the conception of a primary mind in the universe; unless indeed it be bold enough—which it never is—to assert that at *every stage* in the evolution of the universe new phenomena throng into existence, self-created, which had *no* previous equivalent, no spring or source of being at all,—which admit, in short, of *no* analysis into any antecedent phenomena. If this be admitted, then Science is a body of thought, which, starting from concrete reality, utterly *loses* a thread at every step back into the past, till it unravels into the “Absolute Nothing.” Mental phenomena fall off first into the “Absolute Nothing,” as they rose last out of it; then vital phenomena drop away, then organic, then chemical, then mechanical, lastly geometrical; and Science has *rendered* her account by gradually wiping out her score. This system, which deifies the creative power of Zero, is the

boldest but also absurdest form of Atheism. In it Science boasts to be identical with Nescience. No one ever seriously held it, though of course it has been *maintained*.

But, Nihilism apart, science *can* only be atheistic through the confusion of the two kinds of unity we have mentioned—*i. e.* through that extreme analysis which admits no *radical* differences of *kind* in the phenomena of the universe at all, and proposes therefore to deduce all the complex combinations from the more simple, and these again, ultimately, from some highly abstract and simple formula or unit of existence—the nutshell of the universe—by pure analysis of that unit into its constituent elements. This danger might be escaped, if such speculators chose to maintain that Reason is absolutely incapable of uniting the particular sciences into a single whole, and can neither analyse one into the other nor find any living tie or knot by which to combine them, but must be content to bring their common analogies to light, and keep their distinctive phenomena apart. But this is exactly what Atheism almost always will not do. Indeed, could Atheism take this course, it could scarcely long survive as Atheism. To admit the reality and irreducible nature of mental phenomena—to admit that they can *not* anyhow be analysed into physical—is either to put a period to all inquiry as to cause, or to open a broad way into Theism; and the less men believe in an Infinite Being, the more thirsty usually is their curiosity about the supposed genesis of our mental nature.

The result is, that the problem of all atheistic philosophers has been, not to find the *real* ultimate link between the different classes of natural force and life, but to soften away as much as possible the one into the other, so as to make the *transition imperceptible*, and so introduce a thoroughly new creative force *as if* it were but an expansion of that beneath it. It is a mere self-deception of philosophy, to accept the graduality of the stages by which life ascends from the gravitating force of inorganic matter to the highest pinnacle of human reason as any sort of evidence that the universe was all implicitly involved in its earliest stage. This is the fallacy of *petitio principii*,—assuming, contrary to all evidence, that all forces and all organisms, and all life and all reason, lie shut up implicitly (*i. e.* without any manifestation or possible symptom of existence) in that which seems possessed of no force and no organism, and no life and no reason. If this assumption be not made, then, as we know only of one great power totally escaping sensible analysis and yet able to effect sensible changes—the power of mind,—the natural assumption is, that the actual and sensible additions to existence come out of that power. What is gained by showing the *graduality* of the transition from one creative process to another? Because only a *small* addition

has been made to the living resources of the world—is it any the more possible to *identify* it with that which it is not? Because the boundary between vegetable and animal life is but little distinct, can we any the more ignore the fact that some fresh power has been given to the world when a locomotive capacity gradually creeps into it? Because the creeping is so gradual, is it any the more possible to identify it with no-creeping? Because the automatic action in the infant very slowly opens into consciousness, is consciousness at all the more capable of identification with automatic action? Because instinct is the unconscious *instrument* of adapting means to ends, and intelligence the conscious and voluntary adapter of means to ends, shall we talk of the *germinal intelligence* in the processes of the bee? As correctly, or more correctly (for the act *may* become semi-conscious and semi-voluntary), might we talk of the *intelligent cough* by which a man adapts (without consciousness) the action of his lungs to the removal of an obstruction in the wind-pipe. This attempt to analyse away the positive additions of creative power, by merely noting how gradually they steal into the universe, appears to us to show most strikingly how the absence of theistic faith tends to expel reality from science, and to make philosophy the universal *solvent* of fact, instead of the spirit which investigates the order, correspondence, and the ultimate connections of all fact in the concrete and complex unity of the highest life. The positive school, just because they start from no personality, no actual union of distinct living attributes in their original unity, are obliged to expel all personality, all originating activity, from their final result. What they see is in fact only a development of an abstract Creative Function into minor organs, which, when taken separately, are called creatures. Thus, by far the most able recent writer of this school, Mr. Herbert Spencer, looks for his definition of “life” from a survey of all the phenomena, vegetable, physiological, and psychical, of which it is ordinarily predicated. He defines it thus: “Life is the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations;” or more at length, but less simply: “Life is the definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, *in correspondence with external coexistences and sequences.*” Now if Mr. Spencer only meant by this to indicate, that which *all* forms of what is ordinarily termed life have in common, we should be grateful for this contribution to the analysis of a most complex conception. But he slides in immediately what we may call the axiom of the positivist school, that all differences among phenomena are differences of degree—differences in the *stage* of expansion—not differences of *kind*; and so proceeds to deduce that the highest mental life has nothing

more in it than is indicated in this definition. He first overlooks, ignores, rejects, the *special* characteristics of personal life—which would be legitimate in forming an abstract idea—and then, forgetting that it *is abstract*, and that all the *differentia* of the highest kind of life has been neglected, he clips down that highest kind of life to the limits of his definition. There is positively nothing in his conception of the higher life to indicate a real difference *of kind* between man and a vegetable. He must therefore, of course, reject originating power—free-will in man. He does so; and thus defends his position:

"Respecting this matter, I will only further say, that free-will, did it exist, would be entirely at variance with that beneficent necessity displayed in the progressive evolution of the correspondence between the organism and its environment. That gradual advance in the moulding of inner relations to outer relations, which has been delineated in the foregoing pages—that ever-extending adaptation of the cohesions of psychical states to the connections between the answering phenomena, which we have seen to result from the accumulation of experiences, would be arrested, did there exist any thing which otherwise determined their cohesions. As it is, we see that the correspondence between the internal changes and the external coexistences and sequences must become more and more complete. The continuous adjustment of the vital activities to the activities in the environment, must become more accurate and exhaustive. The life must become higher and the happiness greater—must do so because the inner relations are determined by the outer relations. But were the inner relations to any extent determined by some other agency, the harmony at any moment subsisting, and the advance to a higher harmony, would alike be interrupted to a proportionate extent; there would be an arrest of that grand progression which is now bearing humanity onwards to perfection."

—which only means that Mr. Spencer thinks free-will *à priori* unlikely, simply because it is not a self-adjusting *apparatus*, but a self-adjusting spirit; because it is not determined absolutely by the external world, but determines itself after free intelligent judgment on both worlds, internal and external. "The psychical states," as Mr. Spencer denominates a *man*, "cannot determine their own cohesions." We do not know a more remarkable instance of the confusion between the *unity* of the sciences and the *identity* of the sciences (a confusion which always results from ignoring the personal origin of the universe) than is given by this development of voluntary life out of the idea of vegetable life. In the vegetable, he says, the self-preservative correspondence between internal and external changes is simple, limited to a narrow region of space, and almost limited to the present moment in time. In the animal, with the gradual growth of a nervous system, the correspondence becomes much

more full—extends over a wider region in space (as when the bee is driven far and wide for its honey), and reaches over a longer time (as in the instincts which provide against the future emergencies of seasonal change). In the intellect of man it reaches its acme by the ripening of forecasting instincts into a widely-ranging consciousness. The “afferent” nerves bring reports to the brain,—the common-hall through which, now, almost all sensations pass, and where they establish a mutual understanding, so as to have their reports compared, connected, and enlarged. Here, too, ensues the *conflict* as to which of the “afferent” nerves shall get the command of the “efferent” nerves which convey motory impulses from the brain. This conflict is what we mean by voluntary choice. The psychical states, which are too weak to win, and are merely *candidates* for an “efferent” nerve, are our passive memories, emotions, and the like. The victorious candidates are our *volitions*. And this is the *rationale* of our moral nature!—physiology excluding from mental life all that does not suit the scientific analogies in her own domain! Have we not some reason for saying that this is a *confusion* of the sciences, not a *unity* of the sciences? Is it not clear that this positive method puts into the higher science as little more than it gets from the lower science as it can possibly help?—that it strives to varnish over their distinctions, instead of to combine them? How could even the semi-intelligent life of the higher animals be described merely as a cohesion of psychical states, if the notion did not come up from the vegetable world beneath? The unity that was not in the source cannot be in the result. A cohesion of simultaneous and serial changes is all that is seen in the vegetable, and therefore a cohesion of simultaneous and serial changes is all that can be found in the man! And here perhaps is to be found the most conspicuous practical confutation of *both* the atheistic systems of science—that of the positivists, which maintains that to discover the absolute serial order of events is attainable, and is alone attainable; and that of the common materialism, which refers every thing to the slow evolution of definite and eternal force;—that they both founder helplessly on the fact of human responsibility and freedom. They *could* not logically include the recognition of this fact; and if not sooner, yet here at least, they come into collision with the certain self-knowledge of man. Nature cannot give what nature has not got. If all the lower laws of force and life are absolutely fixed, definite, inviolable, then they cannot revoke their own constitution when they issue out of physiology into mental life. If it is the essence of all things to follow fixed laws, if there is nothing but unchangeable force moulding the universe by its gradually accumulating strength—then the conscience of man is a delusion,

and must be explained away. If the pressure of necessity is really removed just at the very point where the sense of the awful importance of our choice is most intensely realised,—if the iron chain of events by which our course is guided is unclasped, and we are permitted to go either to the right hand or to the left, just when we are most distinctly conscious that a false step is an irretrievable and infinite evil—then we cannot be the offspring of law, or embodiments of definite force. The logic of Atheism is consistent, but fatal to itself. We know that we are morally free; and we know that a free person cannot be the issue of helplessly unfolded laws. It is impossible for necessity to emancipate itself. Only if the observed necessity has been the “must” of a divine free-will, can that “must” be withdrawn, and freedom restored wherever the materials for self-determination have been granted. This identity of all sciences is maintained only at the expense of the falsification of many, and the total abrogation of one. The main facts of man’s moral nature,—all those which we indicate by personal responsibility, duty and sin, merit and demerit, praise and blame, reward and retribution,—all those on which the great interests of mankind centre, all which are the life of reverence and love,—are swept away into totally meaningless unreality by this absolute identification of moral science with the natural sciences on the summit of which it stands. It is dangerous enough to scientific reality to confuse intelligence with instinct, and to describe memory as “a weak form” of perception; but it is the suicide of a science to manufacture a theory of moral obligation out of the materials of physical necessity—a theory of vision for the blind.

To those who believe in a personal Creator, on the other hand, all the sciences will keep at once their distinct meaning and their real (not logical) unity. We have seen how Intelligence and Activity have to be traced in any theory which is not theistic through stages in which there is nothing worthy to be called the semblance of either up to their final culmination in man, to whom the former alone is attributed, and all but the faintest ghost of the latter is still denied. Denying the world to a Creator, they are obliged to deny all creative power to the world. But begin with faith in a living Spirit, and it becomes impossible to believe in energy that is not instinct with reason, or in an intelligence that is not the background of action. Force and design are but the different elements of the same creative purpose. There is no force, however constant and determinate, that we can forbear to attribute to free *self*-determined life. We know that force, though sometimes called material, is always *invisible*, and that no one ever yet discovered an *original* fountain of force except in the depths of his own mind. Physical science can indeed

lay bare the contracting muscles and the transmitting nerves; but in its search after the seat of force itself it has to confess itself as unsuccessful as in its gropings after the substance of thought. In volition, and in volition alone, do we become conscious of any creation of force; all the so-called "material forces" are but the mapped-out courses of an invisible power. In the control of passion, the strenuousness of thought, the groaning strain of perseverance, we have the first and purest knowledge of the birth of force; and even though the nerve be paralysed which is the condition of its material manifestation, we are none the less certain that the essence of it is there. If we can conceive force except as activity, if we can conceive activity otherwise than as belonging to a mind, then may we regard force as material. But how is it that, after centuries of history, in which almost all the motion and all the forces on the surface of the earth have originated without human control, we are still as unable as ever even to conceive that either motion or power can originate in a lifeless mass,—unless it be a principle of our nature to refer all change to mind? When Newton discovered for us that every particle of our own bodies is the centre of an attraction that reaches the farthest star, did he discover the secret of a power *less* or *more* remarkably instinct with life and intelligence than that of the volition which moves our arm and guides our steps? Has any study of "gravity" ever made a rational man seriously believe that mere clay or granite can reach out its arm on every side into infinite space and regulate its fascination according to the inverse square of the distance? Yet if there be not some radical protest in our nature *against* believing this, we ought to find no difficulty in it; for all that mere *experience* teaches us is to refer these forces to a local beginning in particles of apparently inanimate matter; and it is only the positive evidence of our own minds which obliges us to regard these physical points as the organic centre of a spiritual force. It is only because we are obliged to accept *Force* and *Order* as the realised forms of a spiritual *Will* and *Reason*, that we have not long ago, at Newton's hint of the truth, bowed down in idolatrous worship before natural powers so far exceeding in grasp and precision any thing that human will or reason can comprehend. The only forces we can ourselves put forth are spiritual, and are ordered by our finite intelligence;—and we are compelled to believe that the infinite forces which react upon us, and by which we are hemmed in, are of the same kind; and of their *intellectual* regulation every day brings us clearer knowledge.

The science of force, then, is itself evidence of an all-pervading spirit to those who will admit as evidence the imperative assertions of their own nature. Thus far we share, in our little

degree, the creative power of God. And so far as physical science is becoming more and more dynamical, we may have some faint glimmering of the meaning and method of creative life. Here, however, our originating power totally ceases. Into the mystery of that higher creation, which is more than the creation of ordered force, we have no glimpse. But this at least we can see, that with every new accession of force there is a corresponding accession in the intellectual complexity of creation, Reason and Will manifesting themselves ever in perfect concord. With the forces which determine chemical combinations comes the development of the distinctive *qualities* of the inorganic world; with the forces of organic life in the flower and the tree comes the first dawning of that spiritual beauty with which the sense of perfect harmony impresses us,—the variety in unity,—the penetration of the loveliness of the whole into the essence of the minutest part. It is not without reason, we believe, that the “argument from design” has fixed so eagerly on organic life. Not that reason is less transparent in the graduated attraction radiated from a pebble than in the lily of the field. But the variety in the latter—every part of which implies a whole, while the whole needs every part—drives out of the mind the bald simplicity of rational *formula*, replacing it by the rich conceptions of imaginative beauty. A force which we can understand and measure seems almost on a level with us; but organic life comes from a spring we cannot fathom. The equal penetration of every fibre with vital beauty, the perfect incarnation of an ideal conception, the harmony of the whole, express the lavish wealth of intellectual *being*; while in lower stages of existence there is comparatively but the bare outline of single-phased *purpose*. You can separate, in imagination at least, the force and the law in physical science; but in organic life the evolution of the former is utterly shrouded in the multiplied and delicate folds of creative thought. And then again, in the world of animal life we have the first hint of a new created *object* apart from the mere beauty of creation. The appearance of a new subject on the scene,—the first dawn of receptive and observing life,—the birth, so mysterious to us, of finite *wants*,—the first lending of the creative energy to the development of a finite individuality, though as yet its springs of life are entirely commanded from beyond itself,—this vast stride in the exercise of creative *power* is accompanied as before by a vast increase in the fulness and subtlety of intellectual *law*. Every new energy is, as it were, more and more richly inlaid with intelligence, up to the point at which, in human freedom, the two become *separable*, in order that we may feel that it is free-will, and not any blind necessity, which determines their cohesion—that they are correlative at-

tributes of one spirit, not mere formally different aspects of the absolute and everlasting identity of an iron fate. In the ascending scale of animal life there is used to some extent almost every material afterwards worked into the nature of man, except his guiding conscience and the freedom which it is given to guide. Images of what man would be, if he could surrender his moral freedom and become a *thing* ("in perfect correspondence," as Mr. Spencer has it, "with external changes"), abound throughout creation, from the beaver to the tiger, from the butterfly to the bee, from the serpent to the dove; as if to mark by the very closeness of approach the infinite step in creative power made by the transition to the *personal* life of man. And here, immediately on the gift of free power and responsibility, the link of apparent necessity which seemed absolutely to cement together force and intelligence drops away, and there comes in a possibility of folly, failure, evil, unknown to the lower world, marking, as we have said, that the correspondence of intelligence with power in the sciences does not consist in the absolute identity of a self-expanding unit, but in the bond of a living character.*

* It is common to object to the view here developed of all *force* as the mere realised activity of free-will in some spiritual being, and of all intelligence which is not due to the conscious life of man as springing *directly* from above, that it is *pantheistic*. The objection is self-destructive if it proceeds from any one who believes that God *originally* made the world; for clearly nothing is saved, and much lost, by attributing to His fore-ordination what we hesitate to attribute to His present act. The objection, however, that to attribute the ferocity of the lion or the cunning of the fox directly to divine activity is at once *unreal*, *i.e.* unlike the truth, and degrading to our religious nature, *has* a meaning in it, and is worth briefly analysing. First, we believe, that if by this a protest is meant against the doctrine that there is no psychical individuality in animal life—that their body is but a shell as it were for an energy of which Deity is the subject as well as the spring,—that their perceptions are but new viaducts from creating power without to the same creating power within,—then the protest is quite just. However absolutely and necessarily dependent the animal world is, we must suppose that there is a real creation of a new subject—a real centre of new finite life; though the springs of that life are held in absolute subordination, and its energies *lent*,—not only created but ever sustained,—by the universal Spirit. This, however, in no way affects the moral question of the impressions produced upon us by the permanent *sanction*, so to speak,—the constantly sanctioning intelligence,—by which God guides and satisfies instincts so startling. This objection is one which applies equally to every form of faith. And it is but trivial; indeed the difficulty is often created by our fancifully inserting a human freedom and conscience behind the impulses of the animal. Or if that reply be thought evasive, and it be said, "Still, what you deny to be evil in the creature, you attribute to the Creator," it is more than sufficient to answer, "Yes; but the inference as to *will* and *character* must not be judged here by the single act, but by the system of invariable law, of which it is a part." It would be Pantheism, perhaps, to interpret the tiger's spring as embodying the *immediate* moral purpose and character of God, though it be His *immediate* sustaining power and directing thought which renders it possible. The *purpose* must be studied, if at all, in the ends answered by the certainty of physical law in these lower departments of the universe as combined with the general purposes of animal life. So far as we may really interpret God by *single acts*, we must keep fast to His free moral relations with our spirits, which are the *only* accessible expressions of His immediate intent and present thought.

We do not, of course, suppose for a moment that any kind of opinion—theistic or atheistic—would change the inductive method of investigation in each separate science; but we do believe, for the reasons stated, that Atheism leads to the falsest and most misleading theories on the correlation of the sciences, disposing men to ignore real accessions of fact from the desire to make one science an expansion of another. The disposition to explain away new phenomena into old is really rooted in an absolute, if often unconscious, distrust of the *possibility* of creation. And in this way the misapprehension of the relation between different sciences leads to a deductive, instead of a pure inductive, method with the later and higher science. Thus we find philosophers like Mr. Spencer, instead of *examining* the moral realities of human life, actually dissipating or distorting them, in the hope of *deducing* them from physiological assumptions. How could any true Baconian induction dissolve the moral will of man into a contest between a mob of “motor changes” in the brain? The fact obviously is, that the human intellect *must* and will believe in *some* cause for human life, and the only choice lies between one that is far greater and one that is far less than that life. If, therefore, we do not reverently accept a higher cause, we are unconsciously obliged so to “treat” and clip the facts as to make them fit into a lower. The unconscious tendency to dissolve away or pinch up the reality is always more or less the result of believing in no antecedents adequate to produce it.

But we must conclude. We have barely touched on some of the most remarkable indications that man’s nature is every way dwarfed by Atheism, and that Science, so far as it gives evidence at all, gives strong evidence of the same kind. Instead of being a source of uneasy fear and suspicion, we have tried to show that, fairly faced, Science adds all its strength to the side of trust. One branch of the subject we have entirely omitted—the evidence of the imagination to the intellectual and spiritual origin of Nature’s beauty. There is, we believe, a conviction, amounting to certainty, in every poetic mind, that the face of nature wears as clearly the mysterious impress of an infinite character as the face of man wears the impress of the workings of thought and emotion within. No one ever yet explained why smiles and frowns *always* convey to all people, and even to the merest infant, the same notions of joy and displeasure. This is a *natural* language, of which the knowledge is inborn, and which no law of association can explain. We believe confidently that the same is true—with vaguer meanings—of the expressive power of Nature,—that all poetic insight sees that it as vividly bears the spiritual stamp of God. But on this we

cannot enlarge. We believe that the one greatest indication visible to an *unconvinced* mind of the being of God lies in the evidence previously adduced as to the relative *types* of atheistic and theistic character,—that is, in the universal feeling that the attitude of conscious personal dependence (we would say *humility*, but that even the atheist may feel that scientific and social humility are virtues to him also) is the most favourable for the growth of *all* high qualities. Take a man, however high, however far beyond all other men, so that *human* leaning is impossible and mischievous; and who will not feel that, in order still to grow, he must still look upward and rest in a Being higher than himself? Fuller evidence than this of the *direction* of the truth it is impossible to adduce. *Conviction* must be personal. No one can actually *manifest* God to another. But there are few, we believe, of those who anxiously seek, who do not ultimately attain a clear vision of the truth that “*no* man hath quickened his own soul,” and that in this truth is involved not the despair, but the deepest peace of man.

ART. V.—THE PRESENT STATE OF FRANCE.

Napoléon le Petit. Par Victor Hugo. London, 1852.

It is not, of course, our intention to say one word of this ebullition of acrimonious patriotism. We design, indeed, to speak of the remarkable person to whom it relates; but we shall do so from other information, and in a far different spirit.

It is always with diffidence and misgiving that we ought to speak of foreign nations, especially in their political and social relations. A stranger's information must always be so inadequate and incomplete; it must so generally be second-hand, and therefore liable to come to him in a distorted and partial shape; it must need, before it can be fully understood, so many elucidations, so many corrections from modifying sources, that, even when his materials are most ample, he must feel much like a man prescribing or speculating in the dark. The more varied the quarters from which he derives his knowledge, the more numerous and opposite the individuals whom he is able to question and consult, the greater will generally become his bewilderment, and the deeper and more hopeless his benightment. If he relies mainly on official materials, these are invariably meagre and often falsified. If he dwells much on newspapers, how is he to know which speak public sentiment or guide it, and which are the mere uninfluential organs of a man or of a clique? or which,

again—like the *Times*, the *Presse*, and the *New York Herald*—owe a vast circulation to accidental and extraneous causes, and are about the most unfaithful exponents extant of the real, permanent, deliberate opinion of the effective portion of the nation? If he endeavours to instruct himself thoroughly by intercourse with living witnesses, every thing he hears bears the impress of personal prejudice or party passion, and requires a terrible amount of sifting before it can be used. And if he determines to see and judge for himself, the chances are that years of residence will be needed before he will have learned the language, and imbibed the spirit, and realised the *Stand-punkt* of the nation he is studying, sufficiently to enable him to observe with accuracy and penetration.

If these difficulties exist in every case, more especially must they be felt by every modest and conscientious Englishman when he undertakes to treat of France. The innate characters of the two people are so widely different that they have all the difficulty in the world in comprehending and doing justice to each other. They are cast in a distinct mould; they come of a separate stock; their temperaments are discrepant; their antecedents have divided them; their social wants and political wishes are not in harmony; their views of religion, of life, of government, of society, are intrinsically unlike. The entire civilisation of each people has a special aspect and idiosyncrasy of its own. The French are vivacious, mercurial, but comparatively sober; the English stolid, pertinacious, but, alas! very thirsty. *We* have an instinctive reverence for law and custom, and bow easily to what is elevated and to what is past; while their outbursts of license and endurance of despotic rule are alike amazing to us. We are very aristocratic, but sturdy in the assertion and employment of individual independence; they are vehemently democratic—as far as democracy consists in a passion for equality; but put up with restraints on personal liberty which would drive us frantic. Both of us endure oppressions and iniquities which it is utterly astounding to contemplate with the unflinched eye of cosmopolitan reason, but we take different sorts of enormities under the protection of our capricious tolerance:—they have their meddling police and their terrible conscription;—we have our Court of Chancery and our marriage-law, and had our system of “impressment.” A religious man in France is usually a good Catholic; a religious man in England will probably be a bitter Protestant. A high-minded Englishman is devoted to the idea of “duty;” a high-minded Frenchman grows enthusiastic at the name of “glory.” Both people are individually as well as nationally ambitious and aspiring, but in a different temper and for different objects. Men in both countries are in haste to be rich;—but the Frenchman longs for wealth because it will purchase enjoyment and social consideration; the

Englishman desires it because it leads to greatness, and may end in making him a powerful millionaire.

In addition to the difficulty of fully understanding and fairly and dispassionately judging our neighbours and allies, consequent on the inherent divergencies of character we have thus sketched out, other and special impediments exist at the present moment. We are deprived of some of our ordinary channels of information, and others are narrowed and vitiated. On many points we can only speak conjecturally as to the "present state of France," because it is undeniable that much information which it concerns the public to possess is wholly suppressed, and much comes to it diluted, adulterated, and obscured. Not only are we deprived of the enlightenment we might derive as to the general sentiment and mental and moral condition of the country, from the free and varied utterances of the press and the discussions in the daily journals; but there is reason to suspect that much goes on which is never suffered to transpire in public, and which we learn only from vague rumour, or through private channels. Local popular movements, individual violences, casual bursts of crime or of resistance, all of which are so many indications of social condition and political feeling,—do not find their way into the newspapers in France under the actual strict system of surveillance. In forming an opinion, therefore, from the facts before us, we must do so with the unsatisfactory proviso that many and significant facts are *not* before us.

Another obstacle arises from the virulence of party and personal feeling which prevails in France. It is difficult to find a man who can do justice to a political opponent, or who will candidly admit a hostile fact. Those attached to the existing *régime* will not allow any other to be possible, or any material modification of this one to be easy. Its opponents are all damaged or designing men—its critics all revolutionists in disguise. The adherents of the baffled dynasties or factions—the various sections of the "outs"—on the other hand, can scarcely be induced to grant that there is one good feature about the present system or the present man beyond the mere maintenance of order,—and that they consider dearly paid for. Many, indeed, admit that Louis Napoleon has been of service, and was even necessary for a while; but that time they deem now past or passing, and ere long, they say, he ought to give place to a more legitimate monarch, and to inaugurate a freer policy. But what that dynasty or policy should be—whether Orleanist, Bourbon, or Republican—is a matter of equally virulent dispute. Amid such animosities and obscurities—through such dark clouds and such bewildering glimpses of refracted and discoloured light—have we to grope our way, as best we can, to something like conclusive notions.

The religion of a country must always play a great part in modifying its social and political condition. It is not easy to give any clear or reliable account of the influence which either faith or the priesthood exercise in France. That influence has undergone many changes, has suffered rude reverses, has survived the most terrible and apparently fatal shocks. It seemed to have been utterly extinguished by the fearful storm of the first revolution; it scarcely recovered more than a formal and soulless existence under the smothering patronage of Napoleon; the decorous indifference of Louis XVIII., and the weak fanaticism of Charles X., rather hindered than assisted its restoration to command over the nation; nor could the universal materialism fostered by the Orleans *régime* have done much to augment its expansion or its vigour. The government of Louis Philippe, however, it should be said, aided it indirectly by keeping the clergy in official obscurity and in the background;—for it is an important fact which should be constantly borne in mind, that in France the priests are powerful *only when neglected by or in opposition to the government*; the instant they rally round the government, or are petted by it, they become objects of suspicion and contempt to the people. They are *déconsidérés* (as the phrase is) by the alliance. Still it is undeniable that, by some means or other, Catholicism has recovered much of its sway over at least a considerable portion of the French nation. Not only are the priests and the Church again powerful, but *belief* is once more sincere and widely diffused. This, however, is true, unfortunately, chiefly, though not exclusively, of one class. Many among the higher classes—legitimists in political opinion for the most part—adhere with earnestness of affection, and sometimes with real conviction, to the religion of their ancestors. It is *du bon ton* to be a good Catholic; *cela sent le gentilhomme*, as the phrase is. But it would be unjust to say that there is not something beyond this. A more serious tone has spread among these people. The severe sufferings they have undergone, the bitter humiliations they have had to endure, the startling vicissitudes which have come over their fortunes,—have in many instances worked a salutary change, have taught them to estimate more truly the trifling value and the uncertain tenure of all worldly goods, and have turned their thoughts insensibly to those feelings and doctrines whence man in his need is ever driven to seek strength and consolation. But even here it is chiefly the ladies who are observant of the rites and serious in the belief of their religion. The gentlemen are acquiescent and decorous; but something of the old, prevalent, half-unconscious notion that devotion is a feminine concern or occupation, like housekeeping or the care of children, seems still to linger among them.

Among the Orleanists those who are active believers are, we understand, most usually Protestants—a sect which in France maintains its ground, but does no more. The politicians, the middle classes, four-fifths of the *ouvriers* of the cities, and the Buonapartists, the army, and the government *employés*, are, we suspect, almost to a man indifferent or unbelievers. To them religion is a subject about which they know nothing and care not to interest themselves; and a priest is not a pastor or teacher to be listened to with deference, but simply the wielder of a certain political or social power who must be *counted with*. The case, however, is altogether different in some of the provinces, especially of the south and west, and among the peasantry. There the ignorance of the people is excessive, and the influence of the *curés* occasionally great; though the peasant, acute, shrewd, and keen, where his own affairs are concerned seldom allows priestly interference.

Louis Napoleon probably overestimated their influence. At the commencement of his career he courted them, and played into their hands in many ways, especially in the case of the *law du libre enseignement*, which virtually threw the education of the country into the hands of the Church. The priests, in their turn, seeing or fancying that they could make use of him for their own future purposes, political or ecclesiastical, laboured most zealously for his elevation. He has rewarded them for this, but by so doing has caused a strong reaction against them, as the tools and supporters of the constituted authorities; the Voltairean spirit is reviving, and dislike to priestcraft is beginning to re-diffuse a suspicion of religion. The Emperor, too, finds himself somewhat fettered in his policy by the necessity of retaining the adherence of these depositaries of local and secret power. In the affairs of Rome especially is this difficulty felt; and in the case of certain contingent possibilities it will probably be felt still more noxiously and keenly. The French troops were sent to restore the self-banished Pope, mainly no doubt with the view of maintaining and extending the influence of France in the affairs of Italy, but partly also as a bribe to the Church and the priesthood. The papal restoration was to have been accompanied with certain securities and promises of good government in future, and there appears to have been some sort of tacit understanding to this effect; but when once he was replaced by foreign arms upon his forfeited throne, Pio Nono laughed at his restorers, and refused to take a single step towards the realisation of their just hopes. Under the influence of bad advisers—his own terrors the worst advisers of all—he determined to govern exactly as he pleased; and he has governed as badly as possible. The French Government is understood to have petitioned and re-

monstrated, but in vain. The Pope is well aware, that as long as Rome is garrisoned by French troops he is safe from the vengeance or turbulence of his own subjects. He knows that Louis Napoleon will not withdraw his troops, however scandalously he (the Pope) may abuse the protection which their presence gives him; because if he withdrew them *simply*, they would be instantly replaced by Austrians, and Pio Nono would wish nothing better; if in withdrawing, he at the same time prohibited and prevented the Austrians from entering, he has been warned that a general massacre of the priests would be the immediate result; and such a catastrophe would raise a fearful and dangerous outcry against the Emperor among all the Catholics of France. In either case, too, the original object of the occupation—the maintenance of French influence in the Peninsula—would be effectually sacrificed, and the national pride and ambition would be severely mortified. The Emperor, therefore, is in a sort of cleft-stick, in a practical dilemma of the most painful character. He is nearly in the same position in which we find ourselves in Oude, the upholder of the most noxious and wretched government in the world. He cannot retire without humiliation and peril to his popularity at home; he cannot remain without seeing himself daily degraded into the real agent—because the permitting and *enabling* witness—of some of the lowest and silliest atrocities ever perpetrated by an ecclesiastical administration. If he were to give way to the disgust which we believe he feels, and say, “I will no longer aid or tolerate such things; I will either compel the Pope to govern well, or will leave him to the fate which he has earned,”—he would, indeed, relieve his conscience of a great crime and gladden the hearts of all the patriots in Europe; but he would incur the deadly enmity and the active opposition of the whole priestly party throughout France; and we doubt whether he could afford to do so.

The peculiarity which we have noticed above—the restriction, namely, of religious faith and sentiment in France principally to the lowest class—is one fraught with social mischief and peril of the saddest kind. It operates a separation between the different orders of society, which can never exist in a country without consequences of the deepest and widest significance. Not only does it divide them in their most intense and elevated sentiments; not only does it, therefore, pave the way for those jealousies and animosities of class which already exist with such fearful virulence in France; but it takes the people out of the hands of their natural chiefs, and places them under the guidance of self-chosen and artificial leaders. It severs them from the aristocracy, whether of rank, wealth, or talent, and delivers them over, easy victims, to the demagogue or the priest,—when the

priest happens to be in opposition to the government. That happy harmony, that safe political well-being, which exists where the higher ranks lead and influence the lower without being able to oppress them, is no longer possible in France. The peasants no longer look for advice, assistance, and leadership to the noble and the great, to the men of eminent ability and superior education, or to those large landed proprietors who still exist in many provinces. The popular sceptre has passed, we hope not irrevocably, into the hands of mere agitators, who will *exploiter* their power for their own personal objects or passions. There is nothing to wonder at in all this, though there is every thing to deplore: we note it merely as one of the bad symptoms in the social state of France; and that it arises much, if not mainly, from the cause we have assigned appears, among other indications, from this—that wherever we find instances of proprietors and nobles exercising their proper influence over the peasantry and *ouvriers* around them, they usually belong to families who are either hereditarily Catholic or individually pious.

To this last statement, however, we must admit one important and increasing exception, to which our attention has more than once been called by some of the most thoughtful politicians of France, and which they regard as likely largely to influence the future destinies of that country, and to influence them in a salutary direction. In former times, as is well known, the great families of France lived the chief part of the year on their estates, surrounded by their vassals, leading them during war, governing them during peace, and exercising over them an authority which, whether for good or evil, was little short of absolute, and an influence which was nearly irresistible. Sometimes their rule was benevolent and paternal, sometimes it was harsh, selfish, and extortionate; sometimes they were beloved, sometimes they were dreaded; but in all cases they were looked upon as a superior order of men, against whose sway—intellectual, moral, fashionable, or material—no one dreamed of rebelling. The same was true in a lesser degree of the smaller landed proprietors—of all, in fact, who belonged to the class of nobles or, as we should call it, of gentry. In the course of time, however, this state of society was gradually disturbed and undermined. More and more these families became attracted to the court; and once habituated to the refined luxuries and perpetual excitements of the metropolis, the dullness and coarseness of provincial life grew distasteful to them, and they lived year by year a longer time in Paris and a shorter time at their chateaux in the country. The sovereigns, bent upon humbling and superseding the vast power of the provincial nobility, encouraged this tendency by every means within their reach; residence at court was the proof of

loyalty, and the path to honours and employment; retirement to their provincial estates was considered to indicate disaffection, and was at length inflicted as a sign of disgrace. Under Louis XIV. this silent but momentous social revolution may be considered to have been consummated. In proportion as the nobles thus deserted their vassals and lived at a distance from their territorial possessions, their personal influence necessarily declined; they were seldom seen and little known; their peasantry were left to the tender mercies of stewards, who extorted from them in order to supply the increasing demands of their absentee lords; the estates were heavily mortgaged, and sometimes passed in portions into the hands of money-lenders. At last the aristocracy, great and small, of France, took to residing entirely in Paris; the tie between them and the poorer classes of the community was either wholly broken or became one of oppression only, and their political and social influence in the provinces was gone. This state of things reached its culminating point when the first revolution broke out; and we all know what the consequences were. After that, for a long series of years, political and military interests overpowered all others: Paris was the centre and the scene of these; and every one who either was or aspired to be any thing, found Paris the only possible dwelling-place.

Of late years, however, a slow but significant reaction has been taking place. Successive revolutions, and the increasing luxury and extravagant expenditure of metropolitan society, have worked their natural effects. The year 1830 saw the downfall of the ambitious projects and retrospective hopes of the legitimist nobility, many of whom retired in melancholy and disgust to such diminished estates as still remained to them. The revolution of 1848 did something of the same kind for the proprietors and politicians whose predilections were Orleanist; they found themselves ousted from their places, fallen from their high estate; and so they bowed to the storm, and went into the country to grow cabbages till the return of better days. Finally, the *coup-d'état* of December 1851 added yet a third class to these retiring and abdicating grandeurs. Numbers whose principles or connections would not allow them to "bow the knee to Baal," as they called it, or in any way to countenance the usurping dynasty, and to whom a Paris in which they had been somebody and were now nobody was hateful, retired in bitterness of spirit to try the fascinations of a rural life. In addition to these men, there were many families who had long been living beyond their means and were no longer in a condition to meet the expenses of a life in one of the gayest and most costly of cities—a city in which bankers, *agens de change*, and other *nouveaux*

riches, have introduced a style of gorgeous luxury which is at once distasteful and impossible to the "old families;"—and these were only too glad to take the opportunity of retiring to the country to retrench, and of ascribing to the dictates of political principle a course which was really due to pecuniary prudence or necessity. From these various sources there is gradually springing up a race of "country gentlemen" in France, somewhat analogous to our own, though at present far less educated and energetic, and from whom much ultimate good, both political and social, is anticipated. They are slowly acquiring the tastes and adopting the habits of their class; they are attending to agriculture, and introducing improvements which their poorer neighbours have neither the knowledge nor the capital to initiate; they are exchanging an exciting for a quiet life, and are acquiring by residence and intercourse that influence over the minds of their neighbourhood which their superiority in manners and education, imperfect as it is, entitles them to exercise. They are consulted, both on public and private matters, by the village-citizens around them, and are probably thus laying the foundation for much future usefulness. An unusually large number of this class were returned as members to the two last republican assemblies, and constituted that moderate element whose strength so agreeably surprised the world. Upon these gentlemen themselves the monotonous and sober life they lead is exercising a strong and natural though unconscious *conservatising* influence; and in future movements it is probable that they will at once prevent the metropolis from possessing that overwhelming and arbitrary power which has often proved so mischievous to France, and while restoring to the provinces their fitting share in the councils and decisions of the nation, will impress upon those provinces an unusual temper of aversion to wild and sudden change, and a disposition to hold by the settled and the stable. They will give a hitherto unknown weight to the stationary and restraining element in French society—to the drag, the ballast, and the anchor. Such at least is the hope and faith of many profound and close observers among the French themselves.

The most influential element in the present condition of France is, beyond contradiction, the character of the remarkable man who now governs it,—a character singularly difficult to estimate aright, because no Frenchman can speak of him dispassionately, and no foreigner can speak of him with a *complete* knowledge of all the facts necessary for arriving at a confident opinion. Nor does it always contribute much to the elucidation of the matter to hear opposing judgments; for though enemies and detractors may be alike in error, it by no means follows that to

strike an average between their statements is the way to hit the truth. We must speak, therefore, with some misgivings; but having watched his course carefully, and had an opportunity of conversing respecting him with men of all parties in France as well as here, we think we may be able to approximate at least to a correct understanding of his nature and his views. And, in the first place, we put aside as irrelevant all consideration of his moral character. We doubt whether, in our English sense of the word, he has one. He is capable, we believe, of strong, sincere, and tenacious affections—even of warm affections, as far as warmth of any kind can be predicated of a man of his singularly reserved and phlegmatic temperament. He is usually amiable to those about him, by no means devoid of consideration for them, and is liked, if not loved, by those who have lived with him and served him. We do not suspect him of any petty or malignant passions; it would seem as if he were much less subject to these than was his uncle. But of a *moral sense*, of an idea of *duty*, of a conscientious preference of right to wrong, of a perception even of the meaning of the words, we apprehend Louis Napoleon to be wholly destitute. This destitution is not rare in France. We could name more than one of their most eminent men in whom it is as marked as in the emperor. Louis Napoleon considers whether an action will further the end he has in view; if it will, it is to him right,—if not, it is to him wrong; or rather, in the one case it will be done, and in the other avoided, without the slightest reference to its moral quality. His object has all along been to govern France—probably to govern her well. He never had any doubt that it was well for France that he should govern her, or that he could govern her well. If he had ever doubted, it probably would have made no difference in his conduct; but we do not imagine that the question ever crossed his mind. He was determined to govern her; *it was written* that he should. Whatever, therefore, would contribute to his elevation was to be done, whatever was its nature. Whether it was culpable or laudable, just or unjust, kind or cruel, right or wrong, no more entered into his contemplation than would have done the colour of the cup out of which he was to drink the elixir of immortality. Like the sage in *Rasselas*, he shaped his course, not indeed with a view to “concur in the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity,” but with a sole reference to the “fitness of things.” Whether his seizure of the supreme power, and the steps by which he mounted to the throne, were a perfidious and heinous crime, as some aver, or a necessary, patriotic, beneficent, and therefore righteous course, as others hold, probably is a matter of profound indifference to his peculiar or non-existent conscience. They succeeded: *voilà tout* !

"*il marchait droit à son but*;" not "he was RIGHT," but "*il avait RAISON*." We no more believe that he made or broke one supererogatory oath, or shed one drop of blood which he thought needless, than we believe that he would have hesitated to violate as many oaths or to shed as much blood as was clearly indispensable and conducive to the object to be attained. *Cela posé*, as our neighbours say, we may henceforth put his morality—the estimate of him as a good man or a bad man, a venial or a mortal offender—out of our consideration. He is a *daimonic* man; he has a mission; and destiny, not duty, is the guide and measure of his actions.

The next thing to observe is, that he really *does* govern. He has a strong fixed notion of doing his work. He is, in the true sense of the word, a ruler, a commander, an imperator. He did not usurp the throne merely to sit upon it. He did not seize the sceptre merely for the pride of possessing or the pleasure of looking at the bauble. He did not aspire to supreme power solely for the luxury or gratification it might yield him, though he is actually ravenous after every sort of pleasure. He sought and he values greatness, scarcely more for what it would enable him to purchase, than for what it would enable him to do. He holds the reins of government himself; he has none around who can control him, and but few who can materially aid him. He has his line of policy, home and foreign, spun in his own brain. He has his own ideas to work out; some profound, some shallow; some sagacious, some unwise; some prudent, some rash; some full of promise, some fraught with risk and mischief;—but all distinct, though by no means always consistent or *continuous*. He desires to make France great and prosperous—*under his reign*. He desires to distinguish his reign by embellishing the capital with works that will be *for him* a monument *ere perennius*. But he also, we believe, honestly, earnestly, fanatically desires to carry out certain measures of administration and certain principles of statesmanship, because, "much meditating on these things," he is convinced that they are desirable, fit, wise, proper—in a sense, right—independently of their possible bearing on his own prospects and position. He has, we have said, no moral conscience; but instead, and to serve him in the place of one, he has a clear intellect, an earnest purpose, a pertinacious will, and a sincere intention to govern effectively and well.

His knowledge is, we think, often imperfect; and his views therefore limited and inconsistent. His policy seems to be a compound of ideas inherited from his uncle, but modified, corrected, and enlarged by long and deep reflection; and still more perhaps by his observation of the working of free institutions in England and America. He appears to value the forms and rudi-

ments of representative government, but to have no belief in the present capacity of France to bear more than the forms, and assuredly to have no notion of allowing any forms whatever to take the substantive power out of his own hands. His views of commercial policy are far sounder than those generally prevalent in France, though still imperfect and inconsistent. He has seen too much of the effects of free-trade here not to be anxious to relax the rigid system of protection which has long prevailed in France, as several indications have shown—among them the appointment of Michel Chevalier, a known political economist, to the rank of *conseiller d'état*. But at the same time he is well aware that his steps in this direction must be gradual and cautious; and he makes no scruple to override the clearest principles of free-trade when political expediency, or reasons of temporary necessity, seem to him to dictate a violation of them. His arbitrary and extraordinary interference with the price of bread in Paris last year was an instance in point. Alarmed at the rapid and warranted advance in that first necessary of life, and warned by history of the close connection between dear bread and popular tumult, he compelled the bakers to sell at a lower price than they could afford (the municipality in the meantime indemnifying them therefor), promising at the same time to authorise them to retain the existing prices after the return of plenty would naturally have reduced them to a moderate level. In other words, he has ventured to attempt an artificial uniformity of price—to make the *average* price of years a constant and unchanging one. It cannot be believed that so unnatural a system can be carried out. Paris is glad enough now to pay a lower price for its bread than the surrounding country; but will never submit to pay a higher price when the existing pressure has given way to abundance. In the meantime, however, the metropolitan poor have been relieved, and the Emperor's aim has been partially attained. His recent interference with the price of butchers' meat—arbitrary and startling enough, no doubt—cannot be condemned on the same grounds, as the existing monopoly possessed by the butchers was a violation of all sound principle, and the Emperor's interference was only in mitigation of the inevitable consequences of such monopoly: it was, in fact, stepping in with one breach of economic laws to correct a previous and a worse one.

The lavish expenditure of public money, especially in Paris, since the Emperor's accession, has been severely blamed; and, viewed purely in an economic light, we cannot question the justice of the condemnation. Not only has he expended vast sums in fêtes, and social luxuries, and splendid shows, but he has borrowed, and compelled the municipal authorities to borrow, many

millions in order to carry out rapidly changes, some of which were not wholly improvements, and which, even where improvements, ought to have been spread over many years. He has been spending the *capital* of the country in order to *create* employment: a plan which political necessities may dictate for a brief space, but which is in utter defiance of all sound principle, and cannot be permanently continued without entailing certain reaction and wide-spread suffering and ruin. The following figures, which have been furnished to us from sure sources, will give some idea both of the expenditure and of the debts incurred. We must premise, however, that perfectly accurate authorised official returns of these sums are scarcely to be procured. Those we give are believed to be correct by persons best placed for ascertaining the truth. In the first place, then, when the war broke out, the friends of the government, and indeed nearly every one, agreed and avowed that any attempt to economise out of the current peace expenditure would be too dangerous; and, therefore, that the war must be entirely provided for by loans. We all know how eagerly and instantaneously the sums demanded were furnished by the people, and how skilfully, as an affair of policy, the matter was contrived. The peculiarity of the mode of borrowing was entirely the Emperor's own idea, and affords a very good specimen of the singular sagacity of the man. He offered very liberal terms to the lenders; but he declined to borrow, as usual, through the great lords of the money-market. He knew what vast sums were hoarded in small amounts throughout the length and breadth of France; he knew the difficulty the people had always felt in finding safe and profitable investment for their hoardings (a difficulty diminished, but not removed, by the increase of railroads); and he desired at once to secure to the great body of the people the profit on the loans, and to interest as large a number as possible in the security and permanence of his dynasty. He therefore borrowed *directly* from individuals, and gave a preference to the smallest sums. Subscribers under 500 francs were taken entire; subscribers for larger amounts only in proportion. We all know the complete success of the operation, and the enormous sums which the novel proposal brought forth from their hiding-places. Including the two great loans, the belief is that since the *coup-d'état* Louis Napoleon has borrowed 1,700,000,000 francs, including the augmentation of the floating debt, which has increased in four years about 200,000,000 francs. The same authorities assure us that the expenses incurred by the municipality of Paris, on account of the arrangement with the bakers as to the price of bread (mentioned above), reach some say fifty, some say 100,000,000 francs. For the embellishing of the city—in pulling down and rebuilding

on a grander scale—the Parisian authorities have had to contract three loans, the first of twenty-five millions, the second of fifty, the third of sixty; making a total of 135,000,000, or 5,400,000*l.* of our money. Of this, the alterations in the Rue de Rivoli and the Boulevard de Strasbourg alone cost, it is said, about 2,400,000*l.* The sums borrowed for similar purposes of improvement, *i. e.* of embellishment and employment, by the departments and communes (including the sales of the wood of the national domains), are stated to us at 300,000,000 francs. These facts and figures are alarming enough: what is yet more so is the establishment of the *Crédit Mobilier*, a society for borrowing and lending on various securities and on an enormous scale, and the designed, though for the present abandoned, plan of interference with the management of the Bank of France, the only institution in that country which has hitherto survived both popular outbreaks, dynastic changes, and administrative interference.

The Emperor's excuse for all these encouraged or enforced extravagances is, that at all hazards, and at any cost, "the people must be employed;" that tranquillity can be insured at no other or lower price. For a time, and to a certain extent, we may admit the plea as valid. His position is critical, and his necessities are great:

"Res dura et regni novitas me talia cogunt
Moliri."

Even now, firmly fixed on the throne as he seems to be, he dreads the turbulence which may spring from suffering as his most formidable peril; and in order to avert it, we doubt not he will continue to borrow and to spend to any extent. The ten millions of francs which he has placed at the disposal of the *préfets*, to alleviate the distress of the actual scarcity and the coming winter, is an intimation of this. But all is not policy; something of weakness, of vanity, and of short-sighted imprudence, has mingled with and tainted his otherwise defensible proceedings. He has sometimes overshot his mark. His intense desire to write his name indelibly upon the country and, most of all, upon the capital, has led him to push forward his alterations with needless and injurious haste. He has begun new changes before old ones were completed; he has urged the municipality to undertake more than its funds were equal to; he has exceeded the powers of the *ouvriers* already in Paris, and has caused the influx of many more from the provinces,—an obvious blunder, and a source of future disquietude and peril; he has pulled down houses faster than purchasers or contractors could be found to undertake the new erections, and has thus caused heavy losses to the city authorities; and he has, by the same over-rapid proceedings, de-

prived thousands of workmen of their homes, and many audible murmurs have arisen in consequence. Every *improvement* dislodges numbers; and the labouring classes, who lived in the upper stories of the old dwellings, will find no quarters in the more splendid ones which are rising on their ruins. This is a source of great present inconvenience, and has laid the foundation for much future anxiety.

The arbitrary arrests, exiles, and deportations with which Louis Napoleon inaugurated his advent, and which so disturbed and alarmed France, soon ceased. Whether they were necessary, or whether he merely deemed them so; whether they were indispensable to the tranquillity of the country, or merely to the consolidation of his new-born power,—he appears to have had no intention of continuing a system so indefensible and revolting, or early to have perceived the wisdom of abandoning it. Arrests and imprisonments by order of the police, and not followed by any trial, may still occasionally take place; it is probable that they do; at all events, the degree to which the system of suppressing news is carried enables enemies of the government to assert this without liability to contradiction. But at least such cases are rare. The ordinary tribunals can and do deal with most delinquents, real or supposed. Many of the individuals at first imprisoned as a matter of precaution were speedily liberated; many of the exiles have since been permitted to return; and all of respectability and note might do so if they would consent to take the oath of allegiance to the existing *régime*. In one point, however, the despotism with which the Emperor began his reign has suffered no relaxation, or scarcely any, worth naming. The surveillance and control of the press is as rigid, minute, and unrelenting as ever; and his English admirers especially find it difficult to forgive this. They had hoped that, as soon as he was firmly seated on the throne, he would leave the public expression of opinion free; or, at all events, that he would liberate it by degrees. But hitherto he has shown not the least intention of doing so; nor perhaps could he do so with safety till he is prepared to abandon his present arbitrary style of ruling;—for, as Morny said, “*ce gouvernement n'est pas discutable pendant vingt-quatre heures!*” We must say a few words on this head.

Nothing can ever be predicated positively, without reserve, and without reference to the context of circumstances, of the value of any institution or the propriety of any measure. These must depend upon the suitability of such measure or institution to national character and national condition. The temperaments of peoples are as widely diverse as the temperaments of individuals; and a statesman who should act in disregard of the

one is as culpable, and likely to be as pernicious, as a physician who should prescribe without consideration of the other. Most especially to be taken into our estimate of the fitting political arrangements for this or that nation are the relative degrees of *excitability* in their constitution. No lawgiver who deserved or expected his work to be successful, or his name to live, would ordain similar administrative restraints, or an equal degree of unfettered individual action, for a phlegmatic as for a mercurial and susceptible race. The same liberty of speech and writing, the same freedom and facility for association, which could be safely and serviceably conceded to people slow and deliberate by nature, and inured for centuries to manage and restrain themselves, might obviously be perilous and noxious in the extreme if possessed by a nation of a singularly mobile and impressive organisation, who are destitute of that "inborn reverence for the constable's staff" which is so peculiarly Anglo-Saxon, and whose history for the last age has been a series of alternations between irrational submission to authority and irrational revolt against it. In this country we have always been accustomed, from the highest to the lowest, to meet and combine for recognised and lawful purposes; and, indeed, a considerable portion of our internal activity and municipal government is carried on through the medium of these voluntary or incumbent associations. But it by no means follows that a similar result would be secured by similar customs in a land where, the central power doing and having long done every thing, no legitimate field has been left for self-formed corporate organisations, and where consequently these have rarely existed except for purposes that could not be defended or avowed—as the "secret societies" of Ireland, Italy, and France. In like manner, we have always enjoyed the right of criticising and vituperating our rulers, as well as of changing them more or less completely on occasions; but the dullness of habitual possession, and a certain inert sobriety of temper, suffice to guard us against any outrageously flagrant abuse of these prerogatives. But who can say that this would be so with a people who are fierce, emotional, and combative, and whose antecedents have led them to regard their government either as a tyrant to be crouched to, or an enemy to be assailed, or a treasure-chamber to be seized?

Now undeniably the French are a very excitable people. They are at once quick, vehement, and volatile. Speeches and writings, harangues at the tribune, leading-articles in the newspapers, produce a very different effect upon them and upon us. We hear them or read them with interest indeed and attention, but rarely with much emotion, still more rarely with any lasting emotion. We listen to the orator who has been declaim-

ing earnestly against the corruption and incapacity of government; we lay down the journal in which we have been perusing a skilful and highly-wrought exposition of the unpardonable sins and shortcomings of our rulers; we talk the matter over with a friend; we decide upon our vote at the next election; we even, perhaps, think for a few moments whether we will not get up a petition, or call a public meeting;—and then we go quietly about our daily business; we never dream of proceeding, *par voie de fait*, to upset the peccant government at once. But it is very different across the Channel. The speeches are heard or the articles are read by all classes, are vehemently commented upon, and angrily discussed; each auditor and interlocutor communicates his own excitement to his neighbour; the multitude of individual emotions are, as it were, *clubbed together*, and make a sum-total truly formidable; in plain words, the glass of wine, or the pinch of snuff, which to us is a gentle exhilaration, gets into the head of our neighbours, and creates dangerous and disproportionate cerebral disturbance. Every foreigner who has attended the national assemblies, or heard the journals in times of interest read aloud in *cafés*, will confirm this statement;—you see men in knots, with fiery eyes and wild gesticulations, growing every moment more ungovernable; you see auditors and senators shaking their fists at one another (even at *vis-à-vis* they have never seen before) across the legislative chamber. Every Frenchman, of whatever party, will admit, more or less reluctantly, the accuracy of our picture; and it is curious that all parties in turn, from the most liberal to the most conservative, have drawn the same practical conclusion from it. All have felt, or deemed, that perfect freedom of the press, unrestrained journalism, was incompatible with public tranquillity or stable administration. Not only the government of Charles X. and the government of Louis Napoleon, but the ministry of Thiers and the ministry of Guizot introduced some restrictions, and licensed police interferences which on this side of the Channel we should consider strange and arbitrary indeed. And it was under the last republic that one of the most serious blows at the power and the daring of the periodical press was struck—whether a wise and warrantable one we need not here discuss—in the law which compelled the writers of newspaper-articles to affix their names. This will suffice to show what the impression of the French themselves is upon this subject. Few thoughtful men among them,—few who had not some special *bête noire* which they desired to overturn,—would, we believe, be found to advocate such complete license as prevails with us. None, we think, would be found to undertake the government of the country upon such terms. The amount and form of the

restrictions they would impose are the sole questions of difference among them. The present Emperor has carried these restrictions further than any of his predecessors; he has carried out the principle consistently, and has therefore obtained his aim effectually. Assuredly we are not prepared to defend him in this particular. We think he has endeavoured to crush a power which it would have been more patriotic to have sought to regulate. We think his interferences and "warnings" have often been arbitrary, unjust, needless, and petty. We are of opinion that by persisting so long without relaxation he has forfeited much of the justification or apology which might have been derived from the plea of exceptional and transient emergency. We have no doubt that the severity of his control over the journalism of France has saved the country from many mischiefs, and probably from much convulsion; but it is certain that this exemption has been dearly purchased,—by the people, because they have been subjected to much injustice, oppression, and misgovernment, which *dared* not have gone on under the vigilance of a free press,—by the government, because it has rushed into many blunders from which public discussion would have saved it.

One clear benefit, indeed, is traceable to the unrelenting strictness of the course the Emperor has pursued, which deserves more attention than it has received. To the effectual "gagging" of journalism we owe, beyond dispute, the maintenance of the cordial alliance between the two countries. With a perfectly free newspaper press in France we do not believe that alliance could have endured three months. In the first place, though the more enlightened portion of the nation has nearly discarded and outgrown the past, it is undeniable that some classes still retain their old traditional dislike and jealousy of England, and these feelings would have found utterance in the favourite organs of those classes. In the second place, some of the most widely circulated daily journals—one especially we have in our eye—are the property, or under the guidance of men whom personal motives or exaggerated nationality prompt to read backwards and to paint in the darkest colours every thing we say and do; who regard us much in the same way as do the Irish rebels, or the lowest American democracy; and whom nothing would delight so much as to baffle and embarrass us;—men to whom statesmanlike views are unknown, and who would be wholly unrestrained by any magnanimous or patriotic reticence. In the third place, Russia is far too sagacious not to have seen her account in seizing the weapons thus presented to her; she would have actually purchased some organs, and would have influenced others, and made them virtually her own by those astute and wily strata-

gems which she knows so well how to employ. All these anti-English journals would have been at work day after day, misrepresenting facts, inventing rumours, attributing designs, imagining affronts and slights, fanning into a flame every incipient misunderstanding, putting the worst construction upon every action. Where our army had succeeded better than the French, or our navy had outsailed theirs, unfair proceedings would have been audaciously insinuated; where we had comparatively failed, our blunders or mishaps would have been ungenerously magnified and sneered at. On the occasion of every victory, it would be hinted, or boldly affirmed, that we had taken more of the credit than of right belonged to us; every disaster would be attributed to our backwardness or incapacity. The English press in its turn would probably not be slow to resent and to retaliate; French boasts would be caricatured; French defeats and weaknesses would be exposed and denounced. The newspapers of both countries, filled with these unworthy recriminations, would have spread throughout the length and breadth of the land, and would have been transmitted to the seat of war and perused eagerly in both camps; flame and fuel would have been at once supplied to all the worst and pettiest feelings that can rage in the human breast; every dormant jealousy would have been roused into exuberant life; every trivial and latent suspicion would have acquired stature and certainty; mutual cordiality would have given way to mutual distrust, and all hearty and effective co-operation would have become impossible. Even where two nations have long been friends, and are united by an intrinsic harmony of nature,—a free press, with its reckless spirit, its violent language, and its low necessities, makes it difficult enough to avoid quarrels, and to suffer old animosities to go to sleep. How much greater would be the danger in the case of allies so different in temperament and character as the English and the French, and where the friendly understanding and thorough good-fellowship and mutual confidence of the governments have not yet had time to percolate downwards to the core of the nations' heart!

The stern control which the government has exercised over the newspaper press in France has averted these evils, and rendered our cordial alliance possible, and prevented bad feeling from growing up between the two armies: in other words, it has prevented the reckless, passionate, and malignant spirits of the nation from undoing the beneficent work at which the wise and magnanimous on both sides of the Channel have laboured so incessantly. And when to this we add, that the same control hindered the French papers from repeating (and therefore the French public from knowing) the virulent attacks on Louis Napoleon with which at one time *our* papers abounded,—we shall

be obliged to confess that a vast and unquestionable good has resulted from those restrictive measures which at first sight seem so indefensible.

But, though disposed to admit that the severe restraint on newspaper freedom in France *may* have been justifiable and wise, we cannot extend these excuses to the interference of government with other and soberer organs of public opinion. The plea alleged for controlling discussion and declamation, addressed by the daily organs of the press to an excitable, a miscellaneous, and often an ignorant audience, does not apply to freedom of speech confined to such quarters as the benches of the *Académie Française* or the pages of the *Revue des deux Mondes*, where the audience addressed is comparatively select, of a higher rank, and composed mainly, if not exclusively, of the class of the educated and reflecting few. These voices of opinion might surely have been allowed to speak out with safety. Their criticisms on public affairs might, we can well conceive, prove mortifying and irritating to the powers that be; but it could scarcely be plausibly alleged that the utterance of them in those limited circles, and in that deliberate form, was really attended with danger to the national tranquillity. A calm and cutting sarcasm from Villemain, or a clear exposition of fallacious statesmanship from Guizot, uttered in the presence of the cultivated intelligence of the nation, ought, no doubt, to be more painful to erring or incapable ministers than a fierce denunciation in the columns of *La Presse* or *Le Constitutionnel*; but it cannot be urged that it is as likely to lead to popular tumult or to weaken administrative action. It is addressed *ad clerum*, and not *ad populum*. Therefore, while we may believe the restrictions on journalism to have been dictated by considerations for the public weal, it is difficult to believe that personal feeling and personal fears have not been the actuating motive of the recent assaults on the liberty of the *Académie*, and of the cautions to the *Revue des deux Mondes*.

L'INSTITUT DE FRANCE, which received its present form from the hands of the first Napoleon, though originally founded in 1795, consists of five sections, or *académies*, among which the *Académie Française*, founded by Richelieu for the encouragement of letters, holds the first rank. This *académie* has survived all the various changes of dynasty and constitution which have swept over France. It succumbed for a brief space under the reign of terror, but soon reared its head again above the deluge. It is the only national institution which every convulsion has left standing; and it preserved the forms, the traditions, and to a great degree the reality of liberty of speech and action, when these were suppressed and in danger of being forgotten every where else in France. It has, in fact, been a precious ark

for hiding and nursing the nucleus of freedom and public spirit amid the storms and inundations which have successively devastated that unquiet land. Composed for the most part of eminent publicists, orators, authors, and statesmen, its dignity and influence were so great that even arbitrary power shrank from a collision with it, or from wantonly incurring its condemnation. Under the Empire it alone retained something of actual independence and distinct and co-ordinate authority. It filled up the vacancies in its own body by free election; it decreed prizes on open competition by its own unbiassed decision; it elected its own officers; and it admitted or excluded the public at its own pleasure to a participation in its more solemn and important ceremonies. One of the most interesting of these occasions was the reception of new members. It is customary for the neophyte to pronounce a eulogium on the deceased academician to whose vacant place he has succeeded, and for the president, or some other member of the body, to respond to him in a set oration. Naturally enough such of the public as could be admitted to the hall (never a very vast number) sought eagerly for places, which it rested with the academicians to assign. Of course this eagerness was much enhanced in those days when all other arenas of free speech were closed; and of course, too, in those days the speakers, silenced every where else, took advantage of this one place of security to say, though with a certain cautious and disguised severity, what might not be said elsewhere. The demand for places, and the intensity of the interest excited, were naturally proportionate to the stringency of the despotism which weighed upon all other utterances of opinion. Now, it is not to be denied that the academicians, since the *coup-d'état*, have employed the opportunity afforded by these accustomed orations to indulge in covert but pointed attacks upon the actual *régime* and the obnoxious individual at its head. This was especially the case at the last *receptions*, those of Berryer, M. de Sacy, and Montalembert.* It could scarcely, indeed, be otherwise, when we remember that the academy consists of the most noted politicians and ministers of former dynasties, whom the present *régime* has proscribed or reduced to inaction and obscurity. Nor can it be denied that all these masked assaults upon the existing government were received by the audience with undisguised delight and rapturous applause.

All this, no doubt, must have been galling enough to the men in power; but it could not be alleged that public tranquillity was endangered by these rare displays before so select and limited an

* As a specimen of the allusions we refer to, we may notice, that M. de Sacy spoke of the happy times of the Restoration as days "when we suffered little and had a right to complain much."

audience :—on the contrary, such a safety-valve was probably a most salutary one for the inevitable feelings of the proscribed classes ; and a magnanimous monarch would have disregarded the discontent of rivals and the sarcasms of philosophers, while a prudent one would have hesitated to venture on a step which was certain to draw down upon him the blame of the cultivated and scientific men of all Europe, and which, with the exception, perhaps, of the confiscation of the Orleans property, is the only one of his proceedings which does not admit of even a plausible defence. Louis Napoleon, however, seems to have been of a different opinion. Smarting under the keen arrows of literary politicians, and resolute to crush every power in France at all capable of making head against himself, he, last April, was guilty of two assaults on the independence of the *Institut*. Under pretence of raising the number of members of one section (*Sciences morales et politiques*) to the same as the others (forty), and, it is alleged, with the direct view of influencing a coming election, and preventing the nomination of three obnoxious economists, Horace Say, Leonce de Lavergne, and Renouard, he swamped that section with ten of his own adherents, arbitrarily nominated by imperial decree. And, not content with this despotic proceeding, he further, by a stroke of his pen, transferred to commissions of academicians *to be nominated by the government* the right of adjudging prizes, and took from the Academies the power of appointing their own librarians and agents, and that of regulating the admission of the public to its *séances*,—vesting these powers in the hands of the Minister of Public Instruction ! Of course the most grave and earnest remonstrances were immediately made ; and after considerable discussion and delay, the government *virtually* rescinded the decree. But, in order to avoid the appearance of defeat, and, above all, the *publicity* of defeat which would have attended the issuing of a fresh decree (which must have been inserted in the *Moniteur*), the Minister of Public Instruction addressed a report to the Emperor, explaining or modifying away nearly all the objectionable points of the original decree, and communicated this report officially to the *Institut*.

It may be interesting here to give a few details relating to the periodical press of France,—details not generally known even in that country, and not at all known here.

The *Revue des deux Mondes* holds not only the first position among the eminent journals of France, but a wholly exceptional one. It is the only Review that has been able to *establish* itself, *i. e.* to maintain an independent and a lucrative existence ; and even this single organ has only thus secured itself of late years. It appears every fortnight, giving to its readers a mass of matter, often exceedingly valuable, equal to a quarterly number of the

Edinburgh or *Quarterly Review*. It was set on foot in 1830, and is said from first to last to have sunk, or actually absorbed and lost, a capital of 20,000*l.*, and to have half-ruined several of its successive proprietors or shareholders. Less than 6000 subscribers will not suffice to make such a review *pay* in France; and it was only in 1849 that the *Revue des deux Mondes* reached this number. Its several rivals have never been able to make head against it, though many have been tried and failed. The *Revue de Paris*, we understand, has a circulation of about 1300, of which not above 600 are regular and reliable subscribers. The *Revue Britannique*, which is merely a translation of the best articles in English reviews, prints 2000 copies. The *Revue Contemporaine*, a recent creation by M. Guizot and his friends, had a circulation of 1300, of which 700 were *abonnés*. This review has recently, it is believed, and, indeed, pretty well known, been purchased by the Emperor's government as their bi-monthly organ;* and we are assured, on authority which it is not easy for us to disregard, that considerable official influence has been brought to bear upon all writers in any way connected with the state, to induce them to desert the *Revue des deux Mondes* and concentrate their strength on the *Revue Contemporaine*.

The *Revue des deux Mondes* has never been the property nor the organ of any special government or party, though several have endeavoured to become possessed of it; among others, Carrel in 1834, Lamartine and afterwards Barrot in 1835, and Guizot in 1845. In this year it was reconstituted with a capital of 600,000 francs, and a fresh body of shareholders, of whom the most noted were Molé, Cousin, Broglie, Duvergier, and Thiers; and since that date it has steadily represented the views of the moderate and constitutional liberals. In 1836 it attached itself to the government of M. Thiers, and has never lost its connection with that statesman. In 1838, however, it supported the ministry of M. Molé, and earnestly combated the coalition. In 1846 and 1847, without being ostensibly allied with M. Guizot, it refused to join the opposition in the affair of the Spanish marriages, as in that of the reform banquets which gave occasion to the Revolution of February 1848. At that period it only counted 3000 *abonnés*; but the vigour and spirit which it manifested in defence of social order and sound political economy against the prevalent socialistic doctrines—a spirit principally due to the pens of Michel Chevalier and Léon Faucher—found such favour with the public, that its circulation speedily doubled. It shortly after-

* Purchased for—some say 25,000—some 20,000 fr. It now appears under the auspices of M. de la Guéronnière, M. Baroche, M. Troplong, M. de Saint Beuve, and M. Mérimée.

wards added to its usual issue an annual volume of contemporary history; and by the time the empire was established it counted 7000 subscribers, and at present counts 9000. Its position is now effectually established; and much of its success is doubtless due to the tact and energy of its actual editor, M. Buloz.

Among the newspapers of Paris, there are some which may be said to represent certain principles and opinions, and others which are simply the organs of particular individuals. In the first class we may place the *Journal des Débats*, the *Siècle*, and the *Constitutionnel*; in the second, the *Presse*, which is the organ of M. de Girardin, and the *Gazette de France*, formerly the journal of M. de Genoude, now of M. de Lourdoux. Among the representatives of opinion the *Journal des Débats* holds probably the first rank, though its subscribers scarcely exceed 9000. The tendencies of this paper, originally an adherent of the ancient monarchy, and *plus royaliste que le roi*, were gradually modified during the Restoration by M. de Chateaubriand, whose opposition had commenced, and who availed himself of the influence he possessed over the two *frères* Bertin (the proprietors) to impress his politics upon their journal. In truth, during the last years of the Restoration, this paper was the special organ of Chateaubriand; just as at a later period, under the government of July, it became the mouthpiece of Guizot, who exercised over the son the same influence that Chateaubriand exercised over the father. It is said, too, but we will not vouch for the saying, that the *Journal des Débats* was usually richly remunerated for its support. Bertin (*père*), its founder, was very exigent in the article of money; and M. de Chateaubriand had often to come to his assistance and furnish him with funds, in addition to the 10,000 francs per month which was paid to the journal in the form of a regular subsidy, and which was continued even under the ministry of M. Guizot. Indeed this journal has been a fertile source both of wealth and honours to all its conductors; places, rank, and public employment, have been showered upon them. One of the younger Bertins rose rapidly in influence, and the other in his military career. Michel Chevalier (academician and *conseiller d'état*), St. Marc Girardin (academician and *professeur à la faculté*), Lavalette (senator, &c.), Bourqueney (Minister Plenipotentiary at Vienna), and latterly M. de Sacy (academician and librarian *à la Mazarine*), all owe their rise mainly to their connection with this powerful journal. The last-named gentleman, just received at the *Académie Française*, is the only person who ever arrived at this signal honour in consideration of newspaper articles alone. The influence of the *Journal des Débats* has of late much diminished, but is still considerable in official, diplomatic, and liter-

ary circles. Its general character is that of an organ which does not exactly *support* all governments, but comes to a *compromise* with them; it is remarkable for pliancy and tact; it knows how to bend to the passing storm; *il sait vivre*, in short; and as its support or its neutrality is worth having, most parties are anxious to conciliate it. Both under the last republic and the present empire *on le ménageoit*, as the phrase is. It is, however, Orleanist—*centre-droit*—at heart,—if a journal can be said to have a heart.

As the *Journal des Débats* may be said to represent in politics and literature a certain middle-class aristocracy, so the *Constitutionnel* is the especial organ of the trading or shop-keeping class—the *épiciers*, as it is the fashion to denote them generically. It was established under the Restoration by MM. Étienne et Jay, and became the champion of liberal ideas, of which it usually took the narrowest and vulgarest view. During the monarchy of July it was generally the mouthpiece of M. Thiers, first in the hands of M. Boilay, and then in those of M. Véron, the author of the *Mémoires d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, who gives many curious details—how far always reliable we cannot say—regarding the history of this paper. M. Véron not long since parted with the journal to M. Mirès, a notorious stock-jobber and imperialist, who, we believe, still retains it. It has an enormous circulation, nearly 40,000; but its influence and authority are limited, as it is little read among the higher ranks, or in what is called “society.”

The *Siècle* descends a step lower than the *Constitutionnel* to find readers. It is the journal of *cafés* and *cabarets*, as the *Constitutionnel* is that of *épiciers*. It is republican in politics (*nuance* Cavaignac) and Voltairian in religion; that is, it is vehemently antagonistic to legitimate monarchy, and treats of all sacred matters in a spirit of bitter animosity, especially by the pen of M. Labédollière; but it does not seem unwilling to support, or at least to tolerate, the imperial *régime*. Its circulation is very large, being variously stated between 30,000 and 50,000 *abonnés*.

L'Assemblée Nationale was started five years ago by MM. Guizot, Duchâtel, and Salvandy, to advocate the union of all partisans of both branches of the Bourbons; to be, in fact, the organ of *la fusion*. The *Journal des Débats* and the *Revue des deux Mondes*, being not independent and available enough for their purposes, they set on foot the *Assemblée* and the *Revue Contemporaine*. The former is edited by M. Mallac, *ancien chef de cabinet* under Duchâtel when Minister of the Interior. Guizot and Salvandy occasionally write in it anonymously, or rather pseudonymously; but it has never been able to obtain a circulation of more than 4000 or 5000.

L'Union is a journal in the interest of pure legitimacy, spurning all compromises, and caring little for the *fusion*. It succeeded *La Quotidienne*; but is little known, and has a very limited circulation.

La Presse was founded in 1836, and soon reached a circulation of 10,000. After various fluctuations, it printed in 1853 nearly 25,000 copies, and in 1855 (it says) 45,000. It is, in that case, the most widely-read newspaper in France. But it does not owe this distinction solely or chiefly to its politics. It is cheaper than any other, costing only three *sous*; it appears in the evening; and its *feuilleton* is usually of a superior and exciting character. At present the *Mémoires de George Sand* are appearing in its columns, and constitute one of its chief attractions. *La Presse* can scarcely be said to have any distinct or settled political opinions; it draws its inspiration from M. de Girardin, and follows all the vagaries of that extraordinary brain. Emile de Girardin is one of the most remarkable men in France. For twenty years he has been a prominent, enthusiastic, violent politician, preaching the wildest doctrines, leading the most inconsistent life. Advocating one day the most unlimited degree of liberty, if you can get it; advocating on the morrow the most unbounded despotism as the next best thing, if the other be unattainable; announcing as eternal and indisputable truths each shallow paradox that passes through his volatile mind; the *soi-disant* friend of the poor and the oppressed, while amassing thousands in virtue of his intimacy with the men in power; brave, speculative, undoubting, and audacious; unquestionably clever, but reckless, flighty, and unscrupulous, "*aussi roué que chimérique*," as was said by one who knew him well,—he is in our judgment about the most dangerous and mischievous man who ever wielded a public journal in any country. For a considerable time he was an energetic adherent of the present Emperor, as long as he could influence him, or fancied that he could. He is now the intimate friend and counsellor of Prince Napoleon, whose prime minister he will assuredly be, if for the misery of Europe and the disgrace of France that disreputable man should ever succeed his cousin on the throne; and then adieu to the *entente cordiale* between the two countries, for Girardin hates England as much as the vulgarest Frenchman of them all.

With the *Patrie*, a semi-official evening paper, of little weight, conducted by M. Delamare, and *L'Univers*, a religious organ, devoted to exciting the violent passions of the priests and the priest-ridden, and written with great eloquence by M. Veuillot—(having about 3000 *abonnés*)—we must close these details of the newspaper press of France. The official organ of government,

the *Moniteur*, we need not describe. Its circulation,—to a great extent a forced one—varies enormously.

To return from this digression. In forming our opinion of the condition of France, and of the character of the man who rules it, we must not forget the existence in that country of elements of danger and disorder which are not found, or are found only in a greatly modified and mitigated form, with us. The “dangerous classes” in the two countries differ considerably, both in their nature and their numbers. Here they consist of the squalid poor, the “Arabs of the streets,” the regular malefactors and depredators,—thieves and burglars, to whom larceny is a calling and a profession, but not a creed. The prevalence of the former is a reproach to the wisdom, if not to the warmth, of our zealous charity; the strength and numbers of the latter are the greatest opprobrium of our administrative vigilance and skill. But though they prey upon the community, they do not make war against it. The criminal and the wretched trouble and disgrace society; they cannot be said to menace peace and order. They constitute an intestine malady, rather than a domestic foe. They have a social, but scarcely a political existence. In France it is otherwise. In addition to the numbers who live disreputably by their wits, by criminal practices and petty depredations, there are thousands of liberated gaol-birds and galley-slaves, often banded together in most formidable union, who detest every thing settled and respectable with the whole force of their malignant souls, to whom any government and *all* order is abhorrent, and who look upon society not as an oyster to be opened, or a mine to be *exploité*, but as an institution to be undermined and overthrown. Such men of course are ready tools for any political party which seeks to excite and profit by popular commotion; and that parties do exist in France unscrupulous enough to enlist such infamous allies experience has too often shown. Independently of these, who are malefactors in grain, are many thousands more who are not bad, but only violent and weak,—whom poverty, disappointment, ill-success, and ignorance, have prepared to listen eagerly to any theory which accounts flatteringly for their sufferings, and to any scheme which holds out a prospect of redress; who are easily misled by the sophistry, inflamed by the eloquence, and duped by the promises of demagogues, and who constitute, in fact, their victims and their armies. These are the SOCIALISTS of France,—men scattered over all the land, in the provinces and the rural districts as well as in the metropolis and the other large towns,—not professionally criminals, but facile to bend and stimulate to the most enormous atrocities of outrage and of plunder; and the more perilous to the commu-

nity because fanatical as well as criminal, and able in a manner to gloss over their passions of greed, of vengeance, and of envy with the glistening varnish of a political crusade. It suits the views of the Orleanists and the Republicans to question the numbers and prevalence of this formidable sect; but we cannot share their doubts. We have heard too much from men of all political predilections and of no political predilections to feel any hesitation in regarding the numbers, the fanaticism, the organisation, and the occasional brutality of the socialists as one of the greatest internal dangers against which the authorities of France have to guard; and the intense gratitude expressed by all classes of possessors to Louis Napoleon, when the peril was recent and their fears were fresh, for showing a vigour and resolution which would always insure victory to the side of property and order, was proof enough of the reality, or at least of the general conviction, of the formidable nature of the menacing danger. And when to all this we add, what we fear cannot be denied, the existence of a widespread jealousy and bitter animosity on the part of the working classes against their richer and more fortunate brethren,—against those who *are* above them in the social scale, but whom they fancy *have no right* to be so,—and moreover, the prevalence among political factions of an excess of fierce and unscrupulous party-spirit, which values victory so much, and principle and patriotism so little, that few would hesitate to employ any tools or to bargain with any agitators for the sake of recovering their lost ascendancy;—when we embrace all these considerations in a panoramic view of France, we shall feel more disposed than perhaps we hitherto have been to make vast allowances for the most unbending rigidities of power, even where apparently excessive and superfluous, and to admit that despotism may conscientiously believe itself to be patriotism, if it would but regard itself as only temporary, transitional, and the regrettable means to a better end. We are not always just to our neighbours, from ignoring or losing sight of normal differences between the social position of the two nations. In England neither liberty nor order are ever really endangered; the government is always stronger than the insurgent masses; the police is always an enormous overmatch for the malefactors; the friends of order are out of all proportion more powerful, more united, and more courageous than the disorderly and turbulent. In France this is far from being the case. Over and over again have governments and dynasties been upset by a hasty and improvised *émeute*; more than once have the lowest classes got the upper hand; more than once has the organised strife of parliamentary parties degenerated into a sanguinary conflict of savages in the open streets; and in June 1848, when the grand struggle between

socialism and society was fought out, for three fearful days did victory tremble undecided in the balance. If we had seen such a fight in our metropolis, and won so doubtful a conquest, how long would the recollection have made us tolerant of even the whims and the blunders of a dictatorship?

The feature in the Emperor's course, however, upon which it is impossible to look without suspicion and disapproval is this,—that it presents no sign of regarding its arbitrary sternness as exceptional and transient, no appearance of approaching enlargement or mitigation. The municipal element in the provinces has not been encouraged nor set free,—on the contrary, it has been snubbed and crushed; the abrupt interferences of centralisation have not been diminished or abandoned; the *forms* of constitutionalism contained in the new system have not yet been endowed with real life; the action of the *corps législatif* has not been emancipated; books, indeed, are published without *nominal* control, but the severe restrictions originally established on public discussion in the higher organs of the press have not been relaxed. This absence of any *incipient* moves in a right direction looks ill: it makes the defence of Louis Napoleon difficult to his English admirers; it will prevent the more sober lovers of liberty in France from rallying round his government. It keeps up the conviction in the minds of patriots that so hard a dynasty *ought not* to last, and in the minds of politicians that it *cannot* last;—both therefore stand aloof, and reserve themselves for more genial and hopeful days.

The sentiments of the French people in reference to the war it is not easy to discover with certainty, where the utterance of extreme differences is so rigidly repressed. But it seems neither popular with, nor interesting to any large or influential class. The army has never been very enthusiastic for it, because, though much glory has been won, the bloodshed has been terrible and the hardships excessive. There has been much suffering and little *fun*; and vast numbers both of men and officers, while lying in the trenches before Sebastopol in the inclemency of last winter, were sighing audibly for the amusements and luxuries of Paris. A large part of the army, moreover, was Orleanist in its sympathies, and murmured at the absence of its favourite and famous generals. The commercial and moneyed classes naturally looked with uneasiness on a contest involving such an enormous expenditure, threatening monetary difficulties, and promising an increase of taxation in the distance. The peasantry felt the conscription severely; in many districts it operated as a most oppressive and inconvenient drain: the nature and objects of the war were little understood, and its victories only faintly echoed in the provinces. The whole features, too, of the contest per-

plexed their untrained minds,—ignorant of the present, and filled with traditions of the past. A war against England or Prussia, a war for Belgium or the Rhine, a war on their own frontier, they would have comprehended and been interested in; but a war 3000 miles off, a war to preserve Turkey, and above all, a war with the English as allies and comrades, presented an *ensemble* utterly bewildering to their understanding;—they could make nothing of it, and they saw their children go to swell the number of its victims without enthusiasm and without hope. The success of the LOANS was no indication whatever of the popularity of the war, though it has often been represented in that light. Every one who had any little hoard to lend hastened to offer it to the Emperor, not in the least because he approved of the purposes to which it was to be applied, not even because he had any decided confidence in the stability of his dynasty,—but simply because a liberal interest was offered, because in France it is singularly difficult to find lucrative investment for small sums—the high price of land yielding scarce any interest at all; and because it was held for certain that no future government would ever dream of repudiating a debt deliberately and formally contracted by its predecessor, or tampering with the national credit. We entertain no doubt that the Comte de Chambord or the Comte de Paris, if either succeeded to the throne to-morrow, might borrow fifty millions in the same way and on the same terms;—if, indeed, the loans already contracted have not, as some begin to suspect, exhausted the hoardings and spare capital of France.

We confess that our wish is for the *present* continuance, at least, of the actual *régime* in France; and that wish would be still stronger did we see in the head of the government any indications—for the disposition to which we at one time gave him credit—to abate of the narrow sternness of his rule as he felt his country more settled and his seat more secure, and to admit into his constitution that expansion and life of which it is susceptible. Had he kept his despotic proceedings within the limits of the indispensable, and manifested an anxiety or a willingness to give even small, gradual, and *tentative* powers of self-government to the people as they seemed likely to use them wisely and with moderation, we should have had better hopes and warmer wishes for his permanence than we can now profess. We will not be rash enough to venture on any thing like a prediction. On one account we desire the duration of Louis Napoleon's reign: we incline to think that it affords the best security for the maintenance of the Anglo-French alliance, and we hold that alliance to be the surest guarantee for progress, peace,

and civilisation. It may seem strange that a cordial friendship between the two nations should be most safe and most firmly cemented under the heir of France's most warlike monarch and England's most unrelenting enemy; but such we believe to be the case. We have had ample experience how precarious was that alliance under other dynasties; we can well understand that ministries and governments dependent on popular favour must be easily swayed to war and evil by the gusts of popular jealousy and passion, and that only a strong government can afford to be wise and conscientious; we conceive Louis Napoleon to be far too sagacious not to perceive that his own interests and those of France equally dictate the most faithful and resolute adherence to a union which has already done so much for both; we think that his views have grown far soberer and wider since he had to deal with the grand realities of empire; and we are satisfied that he values the political *character* and moral rank he has attained by his honourable and straightforward conduct towards this country, and by the brilliant reception which it won for him last spring, far too much to risk it by any deviation from his recent course. As to one thing the testimony of every British statesman is consentaneous and unhesitating: that the diplomatic intercourse of the Emperor has throughout been frank and loyal in the extreme, and that they cannot say as much for any minister who ever previously managed the foreign policy of France.

It may be expected that we should say something as to the prospects of duration of the imperial dynasty in France. Even if we had any decided opinions on the matter, however, we should hesitate to express them; for to speak positively of the probable course of events is rarely seemly, and would be especially rash in the case of any foreign country; how much more in the case of a land where the "chapter of accidents" is always so rich as it is in France! All we can venture to do is to state a few of the considerations *pro* and *con*, gathered from the much we have heard, and the little we have been able to observe. On the one hand, people still repeat, as they have done for four years, *que cela ne durera pas*; but they repeat it with a less air of conviction, and more as if it were a wish than a belief. Then some symptoms of opposition have begun to appear from time to time, in the Corps Législatif, in the Académie, and in the Collège, as during the lectures of Saint Beuve; though they have not come to any serious demonstrations. Still, as we heard remarked by one observer, though few distinct facts can be alleged to indicate that the house is in danger of falling, the chinks are wider and more perceptible. Then, again, the dread of the *Rouges*, which

was for long one of the greatest sources of his power, is dying away, more in consequence of the length of time which has elapsed without any fresh indication of their activity, than from any rational ground for believing that they have ceased to be dangerous. Three causes especially have increased the alienation of the upper classes from Louis Napoleon, and go far to warrant the deep hatred felt towards him by the educated and self-respecting of all the old parties. One is the minute and omnipresent interference by which he has reduced to insignificance men and families who formerly had much local and provincial influence. A second is his alleged meddling with the regular course of both civil and criminal justice; an allegation which we fear cannot be wholly denied, and to which the dependence of the judges upon his good pleasure gives a *primâ facie* support. But what has most of all roused against his government the bitter animosity both of the *haute société* and of the real respectability and integrity of France, is the affluent display of the *parvenus* about the court, coupled with the notoriety of the low arts by which their wealth has been acquired. Scarcely any of the ministers, or men connected with the Emperor, are free from the reproach of stock-jobbing; their fortunes have been made, either by gross favouritism, or by speculations in the funds, which, in men placed as they are, and with sinister and secret means of information, is little short of swindling; and the riches thus questionably won are spent in a style of lavish and somewhat vulgar luxury, peculiarly offensive both to the taste and the poverty of the cultivated and the noble.

The character and conduct of his cousin and heir-presumptive are also a source of considerable embarrassment and of some danger to the Emperor. Plon-Plon, as he is usually called, is a man of low tastes and dangerous tendencies; clever enough, but utterly without principle or reputation; and he is so universally hated and despised (except by the republicans, who hope to use him), that the idea of his succeeding to the imperial throne is absolutely insupportable. He heads, moreover, a sort of subterranean and intriguing opposition to Louis Napoleon, who dare not leave him behind him in Paris, and yet cannot succeed in removing him for any time. Add to these causes for an unfavourable prognostication the uneasiness excited by the enormous expenditure of the Emperor's government, and the chances of disasters, or an inglorious termination to the war (which might at once be fatal); and we have elements enough to form a gloomy and uncertain future.

On the other hand, a succession of brilliant victories, crowned by a profitable and honourable peace, would do much to consolidate the Emperor's power, by gratifying both the army and

the nation. Indeed, many among that section of politicians in France who approve of the war-policy of Louis Napoleon almost dread his success for this very reason. Then, again, habit is gradually accustoming the people to his rule: the neck is fitting to the yoke. The *bourgeoisie* fancy that, war once ended, his strong repressive arm, by insuring order and tranquillity, will promote that material prosperity which is the very god of their idolatry; the peasantry are still his adherents, as much from ignorance as from enthusiasm; the *ouvriers* will be on his side as long as he can manage to find them constant and lucrative employment; and the priests will stand zealously by him as long as they can secure his support to their order. These are powerful allies; and the numbers of his agents, tools, and adherents scattered through the country will fight vigorously and labour hard to avert a catastrophe which they would share. But his principal reliance must ever be, as it ever has been, on his own character and talents. These have never been justly estimated: it was the fashion to underrate him formerly; it is the fashion to overrate him now. Personally we have had no means of judging, though we have gazed with intensest scrutiny on that hard, mean, sinister, impassive countenance, without one noble lineament or one genial expression; but we have had opportunities of ascertaining the judgments of several who have known him intimately and watched him long; and their opinions are neither doubtful nor discrepant. His forte lies in *meditative habits and a strong volition*. He has no genius; his education has been imperfect, and his knowledge is not great. His views are usually narrow, but sometimes singularly sagacious; and when he is on the right tack, his courage, coolness, deliberation, and unscrupulous resolution, give him enormous advantages. He seldom sees more than one thing at a time, and he never sees both sides of a question; but often gets hold of the right one, and then clings to it with bull-dog tenacity. Here, however, we must note a singularity which seems inconsistent with this feature in his character. He is tenacious, resolute, and vehemently imperious in carrying out *the purpose of the hour*,—but this purpose often changes. One project or fancy succeeds another with strange and almost infantine rapidity. Hence, though any thing but *vacillating*, he is very *changeable*. He learns little from others; for he rarely listens to reasoning or exposition, though he is silent with an appearance of attention, while in reality he is thinking, not hearing; but whatever he can get at by reflection continuous and profound, whatever he can think out for himself by the patient elaboration of his own mind, that he will arrive at and make his own. In one point he is singularly at fault. He has slight insight into cha-

racter, and is apt to choose his men ill. In this he is a striking contrast to his uncle, of whom Chateaubriand said, "*C'est un bien grand découvreur d'hommes.*" His field of selection, to be sure, is deplorably limited by the alienation from him of all the notabilities of France; but he has been unfortunate or unskilful in nearly all the chief appointments he has made. If his natural capacity were greater, he would be a far safer man, and his course far more predictable. He has made the most of the faculties with which he was originally endowed; but these were both limited in range and incomplete in number, and it is impossible to say when they will fail him, or whither they may lead him. He is shrewd rather than sound; being, in fact, one of what the French call "special" men; he is an *extraordinary* man, in the sense of being *unusual* rather than being wonderful; he *differs* from other men far more than he *surpasses* them. It is impossible, therefore, to feel confident or at ease in reference either to his proceedings or his fate.

ART. VI.—PHŒNICIA.

Phœnicia. By John Kenrick, M.A. London, B. Fellowes. 1855.

It sounds paradoxical, but it is nevertheless perfectly true, that the further we recede from any given section in the wide field of the past—provided we still possess sources of information respecting it, and these continue to be diligently and critically used—the more qualified we often become to understand it; the clearer the light we can throw on its obscurities; and the more sense we are able to extract out of statements which once baffled us as hopeless enigmas. No page in the great book of human history, which has any thing legible written on it, is turned over finally and for ever. Though again and again recurred to, it continues to yield fresh knowledge, proportionate to the intellectual resources of the mind which consults it. The reason of modern times is more sagacious and more exact in the interpretation of evidence than that of antiquity; and the critical faculty, from longer exercise, has acquired a more exquisite tact. Those contrasts and parallels which are indispensable to a distinct apprehension of the true import of any group of circumstances, are supplied in richer abundance from the wide and varied experience of former ages on which we can now look back; and the laws of social combination which have been deduced from a more extensive survey of social phenomena, place a new instrument of discovery in the hands of the philosophic inquirer, enabling him many times from

mere fragmentary indications to reconstruct an ancient fact—to infer, for example, the latent presence of an institution from the clear traces of effects which are known always to accompany it, or *vice versâ* to assume the effects from a passing notice of the institution. Direct and contemporary witnesses of past events possess of course a peculiar value; but they must be subjected to the cross-examining of a critical judgment not less than circumstantial evidence; and the latter may at times exist in such abundance, come from so many sources, and be stamped with so authentic a character, as almost to compensate the absence of the former.

In the whole compass of antiquity there is no people of whose interior life and social economy it would be more interesting to obtain a view, than the Phœnicians. The effect of their energy and enterprise on the future condition of the world is still perceptible. They first of the civilised people of the East applied a stimulus to the dormant susceptibilities of Hellenic culture, and furnished the conditions of its independent growth and rapid self-development. In their daring navigation and wide-extended commerce, in the resources and activity of their manufacturing industry, in the wealth and intelligence and political ascendancy of their great mercantile aristocracy, they present many similitudes and suggest many affinities of the deepest interest to the form of society which exists among ourselves, and which is distinguished so broadly in the most striking of its features from the intervening civilisation of the Greeks and Romans. Egypt, Northern India and Ariana, from the vast antiquity into which their traditions run back, the impenetrable obscurity which invests the commencement of their social existence, and the monuments of dateless origin on which they have recorded the awakening consciousness of their nationality, carry with them an impression of the wonderful and mysterious which more powerfully affects the imagination; but they seem to belong to a primeval world with which we have no longer any concern; all that yet subsists of their wisdom and their industry does not come so *home* to us, does not stand in so intimate a relation to the still-enduring interests of our race, as the arts, the voyages, and the policy of the merchant-princes who anticipated by more than two thousand years, in the confederation of free cities which they founded at the foot of Lebanon, the commercial republics of Venice, Pisa, Genoa and Holland in the Christian period and the western world.

Of this remarkable nation we possess no native monuments, or next to none, to illustrate its origin and history. For our principal information we are indebted to the Greeks—Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus and Strabo—and to the Latins, Pomponius Mela and Justin, who have followed in their track. These wri-

ters not only record what they saw or learned in their own age, but transmit a great deal of knowledge derived from earlier sources no longer accessible to us; and their more direct and ample statements are confirmed or qualified by the incidental notices scattered up and down the remains of classical literature—of the character and doings of a people which had left the traces of its existence on every promontory and island of the western seas.

In the middle of the fifth century before Christ, that indefatigable traveller, Herodotus, sailed from Egypt to Tyre, to visit some temples of Melcarth, or Hercules, there, and compare the traditions of their priests respecting the god, with those he had collected from other sources.* His visit was evidently a hurried one. Of what he then saw in Tyre, he has described nothing but two pillars—one of fine gold, the other of smaragdus brilliantly luminous by night (probably green glass with a lamp burning in the interior), which he found set up in one of the temples. In pursuit of his specific object he soon hastened away to Thasus, where another temple of Hercules had excited his curiosity. We cannot but regret that it did not come within his plan to remain longer in Tyre, where his keen eye and graphic pen could not have failed to preserve for us some invaluable pictures of the industrial life of antiquity. Had he favoured us with only a few such glimpses as he has opened into the interior of society at Babylon—setting before our eyes the dress and habitudes of its citizens; its marriage-law and sanitary regulations; the blended pride and shame which restrained ladies of rank from mingling with the crowd of vulgar votaries, as they went, shut up in their close carriages and followed by a long retinue of servants, to render their obligatory dues at the temple of the impure Mylitta,—our obligations to him would have been unspeakable.† Next to the Greek historians and geographers, the Hebrew Scriptures yield us the most abundant information respecting the Phœnicians, not only in the historical books, where the relations of Tyre with the kingdoms of Israel and Judah come under notice, but still more in the prophets, especially Isaiah and Ezekiel. The latter prophet has left us a more full and particular account of the Tyrian commerce than any other writer of antiquity.‡ And though this mention of Phœnicia in the Old Testament is only occasional, it has the recommendation of coming direct from contemporaries, and possesses in consequence a peculiar weight and interest. The Phœnicians must, however, have had origin-

* Herod. ii. 44.

† Herod. i. 199. Οὐκ ἀξιόμεναι ἀναμίσγασθαι τῇσι ἄλλῃσι, οἷα πλοῦτῳ ὑπερφρονέουσιν, ἐπὶ ζευγέων ἐν καμάρῃσι ἐλθσασαι.

‡ Ezekiel xxvii.

ally histories of their own. Like other ancient nations of the eastern world, they had, no doubt, their state-archives, confided to the keeping of the priesthood, in which all events of importance were recorded. Out of materials derived from these sources two Greek writers, Dius, and Menander of Ephesus or Pergamus,* had framed complete histories of Tyre. Unfortunately their works have perished, with the exception of some fragments, exceedingly valuable as far as they go, which have been preserved by Josephus.† There is yet another source of information respecting Phœnicia, claiming to be native, which is still extant, and of very singular character.

About the commencement of the second century of our era, when the decay of old faiths and the thickening strife of Christianity with heathenism turned men's thoughts to the foundations of religious belief, and gave a new interest to the doctrines of the ancient priesthoods—a native of Phœnicia, Philo of Byblus, translated, as he affirmed, out of Punic into Greek, and from records kept in the temples, a work which bore the name of Sanchoniatho, an ancient sage or philosopher, who was described as having lived only a little later than Moses. Porphyry and Eusebius, who have each quoted largely from Philo Byblius, though with a different purpose, speak of the original work as a *history* of Phœnicia. If it were so, one cannot but wish that any other portion of it had been rescued from oblivion, than the cosmogonical dreams which it was anciently the custom to prefix to all national histories. In spite of circumstances calculated at first view to raise suspicion, there are some internal marks of substantial authenticity in this curious old fragment. The doctrines which it contains appear to have been issued, in perfect accordance with the corporate spirit of the ancient priesthoods, under the name and sanction of the religious body who had charge of the public records. Sanchoniatho was probably not the name of an individual, but the title, like our 'Doctor' or 'Reverend' (it has been interpreted 'Friend of Truth'), of an entire class. In the priestly legends it was usually contrived to confer a peculiar honour and antiquity on the city and temple which immediately furnished them: and we find accordingly a divine origin, and a priority of foundation to all other Phœnician cities, assigned in these relics of Sanchoniatho to Byblus. Again, it seems implied by the language in one passage that the doctrines were derived from the interpretation of symbolical figures, depicted on the walls of the temple, and explained by the hierophant.‡ This, we

* See Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology.

† Contra Apion.

‡ See the account of Kronos and Dagon, and of the son of Thabion — πρώτου τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος γεγενημένων Φοινίκων ἱεροφάντου—in Cory's Ancient Fragments, pp. 14, 15, first edition.

know, was a customary mode of instruction in the temples of India, Egypt, and Babylon. The references to Jewish and Greek theology, indicative of a comparatively modern date, are easily accounted for by the readiness of the old priesthoods, like the Chinese of more recent times, when made acquainted with the ideas of other nations, so to modify their traditional system as to claim for it superior antiquity, and a priority in all knowledge. There can be little doubt, we suppose, that the Hermetic lore of Egypt has been continually modified in this way by the indirect action of Greek science and philosophy.*

Lastly, as evidence of their extensive colonisation, and in some degree illustrative of their manners and customs, the monuments of the Phœnicians bearing inscriptions, which have been found at intervals along the coast of the Mediterranean, especially in Malta, and which have been illustrated with great learning by the late eminent Semitic Orientalist, Gesenius, have opened a new source of knowledge within the present century.† In Phœnicia itself, so far as we know, not any native inscription or monument has yet been found.‡ What yet is concealed under the soil, and might be brought to light by applying that process of subterranean research which modern archaeology has used with so much success in other parts of the earth, future years will perhaps discover. Nothing seems inaccessible to the perseverance and sagacity of our present *savans*; nor can there be a stronger proof of the scientific spirit of our age, than the conversion of the mouldering relics of the tomb into the elements of an exact and classified knowledge, marked by distinct indications of date and origin—the evocation of the dead, to instruct the living, and throw back the lurid light of their opened sepulchres on what seemed the impenetrable darkness of ages long past away.§

* Goguet (*Origine des Loix, &c.*) has given, in an appendix to his first volume, a summary of the arguments in favour of these Fragments, though on grounds different from those taken in the text. Mr. Kenrick, who in an earlier work (*Egypt of Herodotus*, note on the Cabiri, p. 266) had treated Sanchoniatho "as the assumed name of Philo of Byblus," in the present volume on Phœnicia, admits as probable the existence of a Punic original, containing ancient doctrines, which Philo translated, though not possessing the antiquity (at least in its actual form) affirmed by Eusebius and others. The negative view of this question is strongly maintained by the writer of the article *Sanchoniatho* in Smith's *Dictionary of Biography*, who cites Movers as on the same side.

† Swinton, a century ago, made use of Phœnician coins for historical purposes; but he had access to few monuments; and palæography was then comparatively in its infancy.

‡ Since writing this, we have learned that a sarcophagus of a king of the Sidonians, with a Phœnician inscription containing allusion to temples of Baal and Ashtaroth, was found at Sidon in January 1855. An account of this discovery was given to the Royal Society of Literature, November 14, 1855.

§ There is some rhetoric, but also some truth, in the following observations of a living writer:

"Tous les siècles, tous les peuples sont cachés dans la terre. Le sol m'a toujours

Such, then, are the materials which exist at present for recovering the history and elucidating the civilisation of one of the most remarkable peoples of antiquity. In the volume before us they have been worked up by Mr. Kenrick with the mature scholarship and ripened judgment of a long life devoted uninterruptedly to historical and philological pursuits. He has given us, in fact, a most thorough and complete critical *résumé* of all that can as yet be known about the Phœnicians; and he has placed within reach of the English reader, from the advanced point of view of modern learning, another very valuable contribution to the exact knowledge of ancient history, which he had already enriched by his two volumes on Egypt under the Pharaohs, and by his admirable and philosophical essay on Primeval History. In the distribution of his matter Mr. Kenrick has followed very much the same order in the present work as in the earlier one on Egypt. He has treated, first, of the geography, climate, and productions of Phœnicia; then discussed the origin of the nation, and the dispersion of its colonies; next considered its language, commerce, navigation, arts, manufactures, form of government, and religion; and in the concluding chapters recited its history from the earliest records till the final subjection of the country at the beginning of the sixteenth century to Ottoman rule. In this wide range of inquiry Mr. Kenrick has had the field more entirely to himself than in his earlier work on Egypt. Since Swinton furnished his chapters on the Semitic nations to the *Ancient Universal History*—now a century ago—we are not aware that any English scholar, if we except some occasional disquisition in the third volume of Sir W. Drummond's *Origines*, has directed any original study to the subject of Phœnician history and antiquities. It has been otherwise abroad. In the early part of the seventeenth century, Samuel Bochart, one of those giants of learning who formed then the strength and glory of the French Protestant Church, brought to bear on it an enormous amount of classical and oriental erudition, derived from every source of information which the existing state of literature supplied. "The most diligent reader of ancient authors, with a view to the illustration of Phœnician history, will find himself," says Mr. Kenrick, "anticipated or surpassed by Bochart." (preface, vi.) Etienne Morin's account of the origin of his great

paru le plus complet, le plus vrai des livres. Je l'ai appelé ailleurs 'un volume de six mille ans,' dont chaque siècle a écrit une page avec de la cendre et de la poussière. Il n'y a qu'à souffler sur cette poussière, et elle se ranimera au contact de la vie, comme les morts à la voix d'Elisée. . . . Et puis quel a donc été le rédacteur de ce livre antique, écrit avec des ossements et avec des ruines? L'écrivain, c'est la mort qui ne mort jamais, et qui de sa main de fer a dépouillé impitoyablement tout ce qu'il y avait de faux chez l'homme, pour ne laisser plus subsister que le vrai."—*La Normandie Souterraine*, par l'Abbé Cochet.

work, the *Geographia Sacra*, well illustrates the man and his age.* Bochart was the pastor of a Huguenot church at Caen in Normandy, at that time, when the French provinces were still half-independent principalities, a distinguished seat of letters, where many learned men resided, and where the Protestants were numerous and powerful. Among his audience were doubtless some of the most highly educated men of the time. With the scrupulous reverence for Scripture which distinguished the early Protestants, Bochart, in the exercise of his ministerial duties—"ut nihil e cathedrâ proferret quod verissimum et compertissimum non esset"—commenced a minute and elaborate exposition of the book of Genesis, which proceeded slowly but continuously till he arrived at the genealogical perplexities of the tenth chapter. Here the descending stream of his erudition was arrested by an obstacle of doubt and difficulty, which formed a nucleus of accumulation, and gathered round it that huge mass of multifarious knowledge which subsists to this day in the *Phaleg* and *Canaan*. How the scriptural instruction of the congregation fared while this collateral inquiry was being prosecuted, we are not informed; but the fact shows with what conscientious diligence all Scripture difficulties were then encountered, and what immense erudition was applied to their solution. A younger contemporary of Bochart's, who had acquired from him a taste for oriental learning, the celebrated Huet, afterwards bishop of Avranches, was probably induced by the example of his profounder master, to direct his attention to kindred studies; and these produced as their result his two treatises, *De Navigationibus Salomonis*, and the *Histoire du Commerce des Anciens*.† Since that time, be-

* "De clarissimo Bocharto et omnibus ejus scriptis," prefixed to the folio edition of the "*Geographia Sacra*," Leyden, 1707, p. 4. It is in the second part of this work, entitled "*Canaan*," that the account of the Phœnician language and colonies is chiefly contained.

† The mutual relations of these remarkable men, perhaps the most eminent representatives of the two great religious parties between which France was at that time more equally divided than at present, are singular and affecting. Huet was the son of an ex-Calvinist. Notwithstanding their difference of faith, he had attached himself early in life to Bochart, who was the most learned man in that part of France. Huet accompanied Bochart on his visit to Christina, queen of Sweden, and has left a very amusing poetical account of their journey in his *Iter Suecicum*. A coldness afterwards ensued between them, in consequence of Bochart's charging Huet with a wilful mutilation of the text in his edition of the Commentaries of Origen. They were never friends again; and this alienation was increased by the growing bitterness of religious differences. Bochart's death appears to have been caused immediately by the intensity of an argument between them. In a session of the Academy of Caen, during a vehement dispute respecting the authenticity of some Spanish medals, Bochart was overtaken by a sudden seizure which soon terminated his life. Huet was admitted by his own friends to be exceedingly passionate in disputation. The event seems to have dwelt on his mind; for in a letter written to his nephew, Piedoué de Chersigné in 1712, more than forty years afterwards, he alludes to it: "La mort de M. Bochart ne luy fut causée par notre dispute, sinon en partie. Il estoit déjà attaqué d'un mal

sides monographs communicated to the learned societies of France and Germany, Heeren has devoted a part of his book on the *Trade and Commerce of the Ancient Nations* to Phœnicia; and Movers, a professor at Breslau, is now completing a work in three parts on the same subject—*Das Phönizische Alterthum*. To all these writers Mr. Kenrick acknowledges his obligations; but he comes into the field as an independent inquirer, criticising their statements from the resources of a learning at once extensive and accurate, and with the clear verdict of a firm and self-relying judgment.

Owing to the obscurity which hangs over the origin of nations, and the uncertainty attaching to mythic interpretation—perhaps also from natural reaction against the too great readiness of older scholars to accept as fact only partially enveloped and disguised, the fabulous narrations of ancient poets and historians, there has been a disposition of late years in some quarters to dispute, or at least to ignore, the alleged filiation of different civilisations, and to treat them in their respective localities as *autochthonous*. On this subject Mr. Kenrick adopts a middle theory. He does not, as was formerly the fashion, *pragmatise* mythology, *i. e.* simply drop the supernatural elements, and take the residuum as history; nor, on the other hand, reject it altogether, as utterly useless for historical purposes; but having endeavoured to catch the traditional belief, the impregnating idea which is at work under the ever-changing forms of fable, he uses it with cautious sagacity as a clue for tracing the course of primeval settlements, and recovering the lost thread of ethnological affinities. Against Movers, for instance, and other writers, he defends and accepts Herodotus's statement of the original migration of the Phœnicians from the head of the Persian Gulf to the shores of the Mediterranean; and in opposition to the view of the late Ottfried Müller, he thinks we may still discern through the many-tinted cloud of fable no obscure indication of the influence of Phœnician colonies on the earliest civilisation of Greece. In reference to Herodotus's account of the origin of the Phœnicians,

dangereux, dont les accès le mettoient en péril, et un de ces accès luy fut causé par l'émotion de la dispute et l'emporta." (*Correspondance inédite*.) Moysant de Brieux, one of the many learned men then living at Caen, and the founder of the Academy, wrote these lines on the death of Bochart:

"Scilicet hic cuique est data sors æquissima, talis
Ut sit mors, qualis vita peracta fuit.
Musarum in gremio teneris qui vixit ab annis,
Musarum in gremio debuit ille mori."

Huet, *Evêque d'Avranches*, &c., avec des extraits de documents inédits, par M. de Gournay, in the *Mémoires de l'Académie de Caen*, 1855.

It is singular that Morin, in describing the circumstances of Bochart's death (p. 35), never once alludes to the dispute between him and Huet in the Academy.

which that writer says he received from themselves, Mr. Kenrick remarks:

"The 'sea called Erythra,' in Herodotus, has a wide extension, including the Indian Ocean and its two gulfs, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, which latter, however, he does not appear to have considered as a gulf, but as a part of a continuous sea-line; but when he means specifically the Red Sea, he calls it by the name of the Arabian Gulf. The south of Palestine would be the route naturally taken by emigrants from the Persian Gulf to the shores of the Mediterranean, and the valley of the Jordan would conduct them thence across the plain of Esdraelon to Phœnicia. From Petra to Jericho was only three or four days' journey; and from Petra to Gerrha on the Persian Gulf was a well-known route of traffic, which in earlier ages would be a natural course of emigration. It is remarkable, that not fewer than three places were found on the Persian Gulf bearing similar, if not identical, names with those of Phœnicia—Tyrus or Tylus, Aradus, and Dora, in which were temples resembling in architecture those of Phœnicia, and the inhabitants of which claimed the Phœnicians of Palestine for their colonists. If the resemblance of name do not prove this, it shows at least a similarity of language presumptive of an affinity between the inhabitants of these two regions. The threefold character under which the Phœnicians appear to us in their earliest history—navigators, merchants, and pirates—has always belonged to the natives of the Arabian peninsula; and these attributes were united in no other nation of equal antiquity. The Babylonians were not familiar with the sea, and the Egyptians abhorred it. The Phœnicians were never more than settlers on the coast of Syria, without roots in the interior; as they began, so they ended."

By this last observation Mr. Kenrick does not of course intend to deny the affinity of the Phœnicians with the Canaanitish race that dwelt southward between the valley of the Jordan and the sea-coast; but simply affirms, that the particular tribe which settled down on the narrow strip of territory at the foot of Libanus, was immigrant directly from the Persian Gulf, and brought with it the seafaring aptitudes and tendencies which it had acquired in its original home. Within the area occupied by what has been called the Semitic family of nations, shut in by the Persian and Arabian gulfs, and bounded northwards by the Taurus and the basin of the Euphrates and Tigris, three remarkable movements took place at a remote period, which do not appear to have had any connection with one another, but have each left a distinct impression on the earliest notices of history: the passage of the Phœnicians, or, as they called themselves, Canaanites, in a north-westerly direction across the country from sea to sea; the peaceful immigration of Abraham from the upper region of the Euphrates into the low country, sloping towards the Mediterranean, which was already tenanted by Canaanitish tribes; and the

hostile irruption of the Hyksos, Arabian nomades, into Lower Egypt. The people engaged in these movements must have been all of one race, though their interior distinctions and relations to one another it is not very easy to assign. Mr. Kenrick supposes the Philistines, on whose origin so much theory and conjecture has been expended, to have been of the same stock, and closely allied to the Phœnicians. He places their original home, like that of the Phœnicians, on the Persian Gulf (p. 55). The Canaanites who dwelt south of Carmel and Tabor, were warlike in their habits, and stoutly resisted the entrance of the Abrahamidae into their territory under Joshua; while the Phœnicians, from the time of their earliest settlement, seem to have been averse to war by land, and to have turned all their thoughts to the extension of their piratical excursions in the waters of the Mediterranean.* This diversity of genius and occupation among the different Semitic peoples affected their feelings towards each other, and brought them into various relations of friendship and hostility. Thus, while a common language, and not a few indications of dispersion from a common centre, show them to have been all of one primitive stock,—in the genealogical table preserved in Genesis x., while the Hebrew race is traced up through Eber to Shem, the Canaanites are derived under a curse from Ham. Mr. Kenrick is of opinion that the principle of classification in this table is that of colour; and that we are thus to account for the ascription to a different origin, of nations clearly proving their affinity by the use of a language fundamentally the same (p. 49). It is certainly true, that the peoples who are here placed with the Canaanites among the descendants of Ham,—the Ethiopians, Egyptians, and Mauritians (Cush, Mizraim, and Phut),—must have been distinguished formerly, as they are now, by their dark complexion; nor is it impossible that this difference of colour may have been among the causes of international aversion, as we observe it is at this day between the negroes and the whites of the United States. Still we find it difficult to read the ninth and tenth chapters of Genesis and avoid the conclusion, that something deeper and more personal than mere reference to an outward sign of classification,—some consciousness of irreconcilable hostility in territorial relations and political pretensions, in manners, and in religion,—must have been at work at the time of the construction of this table, to occasion so marked and invidious a distinction between nations whose language and traditions preserved so many evidences of a common descent. We read the language of Genesis, “These are the sons of Ham after their families, *after their tongues*, in their countries, and in

* The inhabitants of Laish are described in the book of Judges as “dwelling careless, after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure” (xviii. 7).

their nations," differently from Mr. Kenrick; not as "indicating that varieties of language prevailed among them," but as intended to mark in the most decided way, by language as well as by other tokens, a sharp uneffaceable line of separation between the Shemitic and Chamitic families.* Such an interpretation seems most in accordance with the language of Scripture, where *tongues* are constantly introduced among the characteristics of national distinction. When our author adds, "Even supposing that the Phœnicians, when they migrated, spoke a dialect more Arabic than Hebrew, they may in the course of time have adopted that of the country. The progenitors of the Jews must have spoken Syriac, not Hebrew, that is Canaanitic," does he not apply too decidedly to the remote period in question, the developed dialectic diversities which belong to a later day and a more advanced civilisation? The only facts recorded appear to bear against his assumption. From the first, Abraham and his descendants found no difficulty in conversing with the Canaanitish inhabitants of Palestine;† and all the subsisting relics of the Phœnician language have been interpreted through the medium of the Hebrew.

In speaking of the Indian, Persian, and German, as "classed now under one family, from similarity of language, though one belongs to the descendants of Japheth, and the other of Ham," Mr. Kenrick seems to recognise a reality in the ethnological distinctions of the table in Genesis, which we should have supposed neither its place in the Biblical narrative nor its internal character entitled it to claim. We can find in it nothing more than a record of popular traditional belief, tinged in some places by national prejudice.

He adopts the notion of colour being anciently a ground of national classifications, and the cause of national appellations, on other occasions. The name of Phœnicia, for example, he supposes to be derived, not from the date-palms which grew there in such abundance, and which Movers, we observe, regards as its probable origin, but from the red-brown colour (*φοῖνιξ*), "such as is produced by heat," of the natives; just as a still darker shade of complexion is denoted by *αἰθιοψ* or *αἶθοψ* (p. 68).

Mr. Kenrick has traced very clearly and satisfactorily the gradual diffusion of Phœnician colonisation from east to west over the three basins of the Mediterranean. In no part of the work does the rare accomplishment of his scholarship appear to

* The descendants of Shem are distinguished in the same way, "after their families, *after their tongues*" (Gen. x. 31); and among them we must assume a radical identity of speech.

† See, in particular (Gen. xxiii. 8), the description of Abraham's treaty with the Hittites for the purchase of Machpelah, where the word rendered in our version "communed" (דָּרַךְ) seems specially to indicate *direct verbal intercourse*.

more advantage than in his subtle detection of the points of early contact between the Phœnician and the Pelagic and Hellenic races, by a sagacious combination of the faint and scattered indications of ancient fable. To render full justice to the eminent merits of his work in this respect, would demand more time and space than we have at present at our disposal. We give the following extracts as a specimen of his mode of handling the subject :

"The expression of Thucydides, 'that the Phœnicians and the Carians colonised the greater part of the islands of the Ægean,' that is, the Cyclades and Sporades, leaves it doubtful what there belongs to each respectively ; but there is abundant evidence, in special traditions, of the former presence of the Phœnicians in many of them. Indeed they lie so directly in the track of navigators proceeding from Cyprus, Rhodes, and Crete, to the mainland of Greece, that if not colonised, they must have been visited by them. Kara has been already mentioned ; besides the evidence of its having been peopled by Phœnicians, which the tradition respecting Cadmus affords, it has been observed that it was celebrated for the production of those embroidered garments which were a characteristic fabric of the Sidonian looms. The worship of Poseidon and Athene, said to have been introduced by Cadmus, may be the effect of later intercourse, as we know, from the example of Athenian inscriptions, that the Phœnicians left memorials of their worship in places which they only visited for purposes of commerce. . . . Cythera, off the coast of Laconia, was celebrated for the fine quality of the purple yielded by the shell-fish of its rocky shores, and was said to have derived its name from Cytherus, a Phœnician. A better proof of its connection with Phœnicia is the existence here, from the earliest times, of the worship of Venus Urania, already alluded to as of undoubted Phœnician origin. In the Homeric poetry Aphrodite bears the name of Cythereia ; but a sufficient length of time had already intervened since the Greeks became acquainted with her, for her conversion from the chaste and terrific divinity who was worshipped in Phœnicia to the voluptuous laughter-loving deity of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Probably the affinity of the worship of the armed Venus with the martial tastes of the Spartans may have maintained her worship here and in Laconia, in which she had also temples, and a celebrated statue in a brazen panoply. . . . Thebes is the scene of an important part of the mythic history of Cadmus ; but regarding it as devised in a later age, in order to connect the scattered traces of Phœnician colonisation in Asia Minor, the islands and mainland of Greece, we need not inquire by what route he and his companions reached Bœotia: The fable represents him as migrating hither from Thrace, which in mythical geography included the sea-coast of Macedonia, and fixing his abode on the acropolis of Thebes at the suggestion of the oracle of Delphi. It is an historical fact, that this acropolis bore the name of Cadmeia, and the existence of a Phœnician settlement at Thebes was assumed and argued from by the oldest Greek historian. The delibe-

rate opinion of Herodotus, founded on inquiry, is surely entitled to outweigh all those historical speculations which deny to Phœnicia any influence on the civilisation of Greece. Whatever may have been the case in regard to the islands of the Ægean, here are distinct traces of a permanent settlement. No visit for mere commercial purposes could have brought the Phœnicians to the inland site of Thebes, nor have led to such an intimate intermingling of Phœnician mythology with its history as we find in the legends of this city. In the occupation of the Cadmea by Cadmus, in the fable of the dragon's teeth and the armed men, in his reputation as the inventor of brazen armour, in the significance of his name which means a suit of armour,* we have evident traces of a conquest, which by the use of brazen weapons the Phœnicians were enabled to make over the native inhabitants of Bœotia, the Aones, Temmices, Leleges, and Hyantes, and which they preserved for several generations, till they were expelled by Argives from the Peloponnesus. By the same event, the worship and mysteries of the Cabiri, which were closely connected with Phœnicia, were expelled the Theban territory. The connection of the history of Bacchus and the introduction of his worship, with the history of Cadmus, point to a migration of the Phœnicians from Thrace and Bœotia rather than immediately from Phœnicia. For the oldest mention of the Dionysiac worship in Grecian literature represents Bacchus as in conflict with Lycurgus, king of the Edones, inhabiting the country near Amphipolis, and he had no original or special connection with the Phœnician mythology, though he may have been identified with some of its divinities by that system of interpretation and syncretism which prevailed in later times. Thrace was the immediate, Lydia and Phrygia the remoter source from which it came into Greece, and Thebes the first place in Southern Greece in which it gained a footing. The worship of Minerva at Thebes appears to have been more purely Phœnician." (pp. 94-100.)

In a former work† Mr. Kenrick had employed the same principle of investigation to connect together the scattered notices of the worship of the Cabiri, and detect their presence under the endless shapes of mythic transformation, tracking them first of all along the acknowledged seats of the Pelasgi, and through these indicating the probability of still earlier Phœnician influence, as though the Pelasgi had been the original link between Phœnician and Hellenic civilisation. In the present volume, as the result of further reflection and inquiry, Mr. Kenrick expresses a more decided opinion as to the undoubted influence of the Phœnicians on the Greeks. We are surprised that the dissertation just referred to (for a dissertation it is, though it appears in the unpretending form of a note), should not have excited more attention than, as far as we are aware, it has ever received. It can only have been neglected from the general indifference of our country to all

* Κάδμος. δόρυ, λόφος, ἀσπίς. Hesych. The root is κάω, *instruo*.
The Egypt of Herodotus.

questions that lie remote from the immediate interests of the day ; for it has ever seemed to us one of the best specimens of modern scholarship, exhibiting a remarkable union of the opposite gifts of analysis and combination, exercised in a field which demands the greatest ingenuity and most varied learning, yet withal so abounding in deceitful appearances, that except under the guidance of a consummate judgment, the acutest minds will wander the furthest from truth, and the deepest erudition be the most prolific of absurdity.

On the subject of the alphabet Mr. Kenrick adheres to the generally received opinion, that it consisted, in the earliest form in which we can trace it, both among the Phœnicians, and among the Greeks who derived it from them, of only sixteen letters, including the *vau* and the *digamma* ; and he quotes a very curious passage from Irenæus in confirmation of it (p. 151). We observe that he differs on this point from Professor Key (*On the Alphabet*, p. 27), who argues that in both languages it must originally have contained twenty letters, from the fact that the *zain* and the *zeta*, the *cheth* and the *eta*, the *teth* and the *theta*, the *samech* and the *xi*, fill corresponding places in the two alphabets, and must therefore have been there from the first,—obviously distinguishable in this respect from the four last letters of the Greek alphabet, which have all the appearance of a simultaneous posterior addition.

Mr. Kenrick thinks the Phœnicians penetrated to the far west at a very early date, and had probably made a settlement at Tartessus in Spain before the time of Moses (p. 118). In this part of his work, however, we miss a preliminary criticism of the sources from which many of his statements are drawn. In regard to his Greek and Latin authorities this was unnecessary ; for here the labours of Heyne, Heeren, and Dahlmann had already accomplished all that was possible. But for the books of the Old Testament something more was required in the present state of opinion respecting them : yet they are constantly cited indiscriminately and without remark, as if no question had ever been raised by learned and serious men about their age and character and principle of composition. This is very unsatisfactory ; as, from being left in ignorance on these points, we do not know when a passage is quoted, what is the limit of time within which we may accept its testimony as pertinent and reliable. The author furnishes us with no criteria for testing the grounds of his own judgment. We have already glanced at this deficiency in speaking of Mr. Kenrick's use of the genealogical table (Gen. x.), and we are made to feel it again in his determination from the same authority, of the probable date of the Phœnician occupation of Tartessus. Tarshish is mentioned in this table along with

Kittim (the isles of the Mediterranean), with Elisha (probably Elis, or Peloponnesus), and with Dodanim (possibly Dodona),* among the descendants of Japheth. Upon which the remark is made: "If this chapter be of the same date with the rest of the book of Genesis, it must have been written in the fifteenth century B.C., and it is credible that even then Phœnician mariners had passed the Pillars of Hercules." We do not affirm the incredibility of the event; but if evidence of its actual occurrence be intended to be derived from this passage in Genesis, we cannot avoid remarking, that it involves a condition, and rests on an assumption; the condition being, that the chapter be of the same date with the rest of the book, and the assumption, that the book itself, in the form and fulness in which we now possess it, was actually written by Moses 1500 B.C. Subsequent statements do not seem to confirm this very early date for the Phœnician colonisation of Tartessus. "Tarshish is not mentioned in the historical books of Scripture from Genesis to the time of Solomon" (p. 131). And the two psalms (the 48th and 72d) where the name occurs, could not have been written earlier than his reign. Traditions concur in representing the earliest settlements in Tartessus to have been made by Tyrians (p. 124); and Gadeira their principal factory or emporium in that region, was founded 1100 B.C., about the commencement of the kingly period among the Israelites. In the course of the eleventh century B.C., Tyre must have grown rapidly in power and wealth, and the name of its distant colony had begun to be more widely known. In the time of David, Tyre had already eclipsed the more ancient city of Sidon: yet we are told that "the Tyrian annals contained no *historical* facts earlier than the reign of Hiram," who was his contemporary (p. 169). These surmises as to the probability of a later discovery and knowledge of Tarshish would weigh nothing, it is true, against positive evidence to the contrary; and it is because we desire such evidence, if it can be had, and would gladly see the chronological value of the earlier scriptural statements clearly established (though hesitation about it in certain points is quite consistent with deep reverence for the *religious* authority of the Bible), that we cannot but regret a scholar so profound and acute as Mr. Kenrick should not have felt it necessary to express his opinion on a point of criticism directly affecting the basis of many of his inferences and reasonings.

On the whole, the Hellenic side of his subject has been more fully developed and more satisfactorily handled by Mr. Kenrick than the Hebraic. He has so entirely confined himself in the latter direction to an indication of the simple statements of the sacred writers, and abstained so religiously from even the sober

* Gesenius, Hebräisch. Wörterb., sub voc. Tarshish and Kittim.

speculation which facts themselves would naturally have suggested, and of which he has shown himself such a master in his treatment of early Greek history, that he has omitted to fill up the meagre outline of the annalist with the living colours which legitimate inference and cautious comparison might have supplied, and failed in consequence to impart to some portions of his work the deepest interest of which they were susceptible. He has observed, indeed, at the conclusion of the volume, that the "history of the Phœnician states has been treated too much from the polemical point of view" (p. 454), and that injustice has been done them from the supposed opposition of their interests to those of the Jews. But this idea has not been worked out; we do not recollect any instances of its application to particular cases in the body of the work. Yet the affinities and the distinctions between the Phœnician and the Hebrew peoples are so marked and so curious, that a free comparison of them from a dispassionate and elevated point of view, would have helped to bring out more clearly the true significance of this period of history, and must have rounded in a more perfect understanding and more reverential appreciation of the history and literature of the Hebrews. We have long felt, that to penetrate to the *divine* element which we firmly believe to exist in that history and literature, we must approach them with a more *human* feeling; that we must divest ourselves of the distrustful cautiousness in every thing respecting them, which only implies the weakness or the absence of a genuine faith; and that instead of insulating them from the great community of human interests, it should rather be our object, by surrendering foregone conclusions, and freely recognising their manifold natural relations to other forms of mental activity and social existence, to discern with a clearer vision and grasp with a firmer belief their appointed place and function in the grand economy of Providence. That two nations, issuing from the same stock and speaking essentially the same language, distinguished from their neighbours by some peculiar usages,* dwelling within the limits of the same territory, pressed upon and influenced by the same contiguous civilisations—should nevertheless have struck out so different a type of national character; should have been so strikingly distinguished from each other in arts, manners, beliefs, and aims, and left so different an impression on the subsequent course of human history—is one of those phenomena which, as we interpret them, yield the most conclusive evidence that the genius and destined career of nations as of individuals are regulated by influences which cannot originate within the system of material causation, but must issue from an all-directing Intelligence which transcends and embraces it. The agree-

* The Hebrews and the Phœnicians both practised circumcision (p. 329).

ment and the diversity of the Hebrew and the Phœnician character are curiously brought out in small incidental particulars. In a Carthaginian tablet discovered at Marseilles in 1845, and containing a tariff of the price of different victims, or perhaps of their commutation—which has been interpreted by Movers, and fully described by Mr. Kenrick in his note on the Phœnician alphabet and language (p. 175-8)—we are struck with a general similarity in the tone of the regulations to that of the Levitical portions of the Pentateuch; and yet, in the midst of this external conformity, the essential distinction in the *moral* character of the temple-service of the two peoples is strikingly evinced by Movers's very probable rendering of a word in the Phœnician inscription, which admits of direct comparison with a passage in Deuteronomy (xxiii. 18). If Movers be correct in his translation, we have, in the Carthaginian table, a precept relative to the offerings of one of the *ιερόδουλοι*, or consecrated female slaves, attached for impure purposes to many of the temples of antiquity, especially in places of great commercial resort, like Corinth or Marseilles. In Deuteronomy the same class of persons are alluded to (indeed the same Semitic word occurs, both in the Hebrew law and in the Phœnician inscription); but in accordance with that severe purity which pervades the whole Mosaic code, their offerings are forbidden as an abomination to Jehovah. Still, both nations, true to the general impulse which a higher Power had impressed on them, were working out unconsciously, in spite of cleaving prejudices, dark passions, and degrading sensuality, the great purposes of an all-embracing Providence, and preparing the elements of a civilisation nobler and purer than their own; one, nursing close within its bosom a seed of spiritual life, till it should have grown up into beauty and the world be prepared to accept the expanded flower; the other, scattering far and wide over the western world the materials of a vast industrial development, essential to the growth of the outward life of man; each destined in its time and place to check the other's exorbitance and supplement its deficiency; and both cherishing a power whose internal resources and manifold applications they little suspected, and the wide range of whose flight into the limitless future of the human race they could not foresee.

“Omnibus mundi Dominator horis
Aptat urgendas per inane pennas :
Pars adhuc nido latet, et futuros
Crescit in annos.”*

Mr. Kenrick passes a favourable judgment on the Phœnicians as a people; and we see no reason for dissenting from it.

* Casimir. Carm. i. 4.

"No nation which enjoyed ascendancy in the ancient world conferred such benefits on the rest of mankind, and at the same time inflicted upon it so little injury, as Phœnicia. Its settlements were usually peaceful; it rarely aimed at conquest, and it diffused from the East to the farthest West the knowledge of letters and the advantages of commerce."

Doubtless they were not free from the vices to which their peculiar form of civilisation exposed them, and which the Hebrew prophets, from their higher and at the same time narrower point of view, have denounced with such unsparing severity. But their riches and luxury were regarded with envy by their poorer neighbours; and this feeling, mingling with dislike of their pride, their sensuality, and their selfish grasping spirit, disposed less prosperous communities to view their humiliation with satisfaction, and to anticipate their downfall with joy; and we must allow for its influence in the descriptions transmitted to us of their corruption and wickedness.

Mr. Kenrick has an interesting chapter on the religion of the Phœnicians, which he has treated with his usual clearness and discrimination. Male and female deities were worshipped in the temples of Phœnicia. Under various titles and forms, they seem to have been expressions more or less direct of the great creative and restorative energies of nature, supposed to reside specially in the sun and the moon. Baal and Astarte, or Ashtarothe, are the names most familiar to us from the Old Testament, as the principal objects of Phœnician adoration. In the Phœnician, as in other ancient religions, deity lay within the limits of the physical universe, and was subject to its ultimate laws: in that of the Hebrews, God was above the world, and independent of it; "in the beginning He created the heavens and the earth;" and He had direct access by his Spirit to the soul of man. The distinction is a vital one, and of immense effect in the operation of the two religious systems on the moral condition of the human race. Each of the cities of the Phœnician confederation had its tutelary god. Melcarth,—one of the many personifications of the sun, and the counterpart of Hercules among the Greeks, hence often called the Tyrian Hercules,—was the special deity of Tyre, and had his temples in the various settlements of the Phœnicians to the far west. In addition to his other attributes, he presided over navigation, and was the god of trade and war. For some reason which lies hid in the remote obscurity of the subject, but which has operated with remarkable uniformity, human sacrifices have been constantly associated with a sun and planet worship; and we find traces of their existence among the Phœnicians. Mr. Kenrick is of opinion that they were not so frequent as has been asserted;

and it is not impossible, that with the growth of arts and refinement, and under the humanising influence of commerce, the religion may gradually have relaxed, except under the stimulus of occasional excitement, the more repulsive features of its original ferocity. With some of the temples, especially of the female deities, licentious rites were associated; though in the Phœnician form of worship this voluptuous character was less prominently expressed than in the Babylonian. Still its horrors and impurities were sufficiently odious, and fearfully tenacious of life; such as only the severe energy of the Hebraic monotheism was effectual to check, and the refined anthropomorphism of the Greeks, if it could not altogether abolish, endeavoured partially to soften and idealise. Diodorus Siculus's description of the sacrifice of infants to Saturn or Moloch—another form of the sun—at Carthage, is one of the most fearful pictures on record of a frenzied aberration of the religious sentiment:

“Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.”

It is creditable to the Greeks and Romans, that they made efforts at various times to put a stop to this inhuman practice, though it endured in spite of them to a remote age. It had struck a deep root, and was difficult to exterminate. Plutarch says, that Gelon made its cessation an article in his treaty of peace with the Carthaginians after the battle of Himera;* while it was Tiberius, according to Tertullian, who finally abolished it, and hung the priests on the trees of their sacred grove. The latter tendencies of the old civilisation were gradually preparing the way for the ascendancy of a more benignant religion.

The subject of which Mr. Kenrick has treated in the present volume, the thorough and sometimes the minute criticism with which he has investigated its several points, and the calm, equable, unimpassioned character of his style, will probably prevent his work from becoming popular with that numerous class who read for amusement rather than for instruction, who seek excitement above all things in literature, and are ever in pursuit of paradox or novelty. But those who have a healthier mental appetite, and find knowledge delightful for its own sake, will be attracted to pages that are filled with the most interesting matter drawn from the best sources, selected and compressed with admirable judg-

* De Serâ Numinis Vindictâ, vi. In a passage in his treatise De Superstitione (quoted by Wyttenbach, Animadvers. in loc.), Plutarch has described to the life the horrors of these human sacrifices. The childless rich bought children of the poor, “like lambs or doves,” for the occasion.

Τῷ Κρόνῳ—αὐτοὶ τὰ αὐτῶν τέκνα καθιέρουον, οἱ δὲ ἄτεκνοι παρὰ τῶν πενήτων ἀνούμενοι παῖδια κατέσφαζον καθάπερ ἄρνας ἢ νεοσσούς· παριστήκει δὲ ἡ μητὴρ ἄτεγκτος καὶ ἀστένακτος· εἰ δὲ στενάζαιεν ἢ δακρύσειεν, εἶδει τῆς τιμῆς στέρεσθαι, τὸ δὲ παῖδιον οὐδὲν ἦπτον ἐθύετο· κρότου δὲ κατεπίπλατο πάντα πρὸ τοῦ ἀγάλματος, ἐπαυλοῦντων καὶ τυμπανίζοντων, ἕνεκα τοῦ μὴ γενέσθαι τὴν βοήν τῶν θρήνων ἐξάκουστον.

ment, and made intelligible to every one by the singular clearness and precision with which it is presented. For scholars who can appreciate the depth and accuracy of learning which it displays, this work will possess a peculiar value, as bringing before them in a form at once brief and comprehensive the collective results of a thorough critical examination of all our existing sources of information respecting one of the most curious and important peoples of the ancient world. Some, who may not possess the author's great attainments, will venture probably to differ from him on insulated points, in the exercise of that modest and manly freedom of judgment of which his own writings afford so fine an example; indeed, it is one of their excellences, that from the thorough honesty of their execution they furnish a man who thinks as he reads with the means of justifying a dissent from their conclusions. In closing this volume, we look back on it with more than ordinary satisfaction as a specimen of sterling English scholarship. Thoroughness is the character stamped on every page. The learning is all original, worked out by the writer himself from the primitive source, and carefully passed, ere it deposit its results on paper, through the sifting and refining process of his own clear judgment and searching analysis. It is not got up hastily at second-hand from the labours of others, and invested with an array of authorities which it has not the merit of having searched and tested; but it presents us with the ripened fruit of the study and thought of years. Its display of learning is unobtrusive and needful, simply illustrative or confirmatory of statements in the text; and so much of it as appears is but a sample of the richer treasures that are implied. It is dispensed with a quiet consciousness of reserved strength and solid opulence—with a certain dryness and almost indifference of manner—that are in striking contrast with the fidgety bustle and pretence of the quacks of literature. Works of such a character are not very abundant in our age, nor are they adequately appreciated when they appear; but we should cordially welcome them when they do come, as satisfactory indications, amidst the increasing tendency to superficiality and the rage for popularising every thing, that there are men yet among us who comprehend the functions of genuine scholarship, and well understand that knowledge deserving the name is not to be snatched by handfuls and then scattered forthwith among the crowd, but must be drawn from the primal fountains that lie remote among the heights and solitudes of literature, must be appropriated and assimilated, and wrought into its own nature, by the action of the mind itself, must be animated by principle, and enlightened by theory, and reduced to harmonious self-consistency; and that only after the study and meditation of years, should its essence and its extract

be given forth in appropriate forms for the nourishment of the general mind. All literature need not, indeed, and cannot be of this description; but it is indispensable to the maintenance of our rank among civilised nations, that due encouragement should be given to the production of a certain number of works bearing this high character of scholarship. They help to balance the opposite scale, which gravitates downwards. They keep up the standard of excellence, and check the tendency to a continual depression towards the level of the ever-widening area of popular instruction. Let not this area be contracted at a single point; let it expand more and more; but let the surface occupied by the many be continually raised towards the height of the few, not the eminence of the few brought down to the level of the many.

Mr. Kenrick is one of those who have attained to first-rate scholarship, and rendered the highest services to learning acknowledged beyond the limits of his own country, outside all the privileges and independent of all the honours and encouragements that are conferred by our great ecclesiastical establishment and the two noble universities so intimately associated with it and so deeply imbued with its spirit. His example shows that the love of truth may be as powerful an incentive to industry as the prospect of a bishopric, and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake yield as full a recompense as the richest benefice which the premier could bestow. There always have been, there still are, and we trust there ever will be, a few such men in all the divisions of the wide field of enlightened and conscientious nonconformity. We honour them from our heart. Taking our stand on the characteristic principles of this Review, apart from all sectarian engagement and prepossession, and looking out on the future of our country with the broad vision and unbiassed sympathies of a truly *national* heart, we cannot but see in the preservation of such men amongst us, in the encouragement of their learning, and in the extension of their mental and social influence, an indispensable guarantee for the maintenance of the best interests of Christian truth and rational liberty. A free learning, spiritualised and ennobled by a free religion, is one of the most urgent requirements of our time; but it is imperilled between opposite dangers—sacerdotal hollowness and formalism on one hand, and the rude anarchy of unlettered fanaticism or coarse unbelief on the other. Till the old universities are more thoroughly purged from the ecclesiastical element which so powerfully leavens them, they cannot become suitable places either for the training or for the working of the kind of men whom our age imperiously demands; and the highest interests of those universities themselves and their associated church will be best promoted, not by the annihilation of all noble and effectual rivalry, but by the constant presence of a competition

which they cannot but respect, and which must rouse them to the utmost development of their internal resources of self-renovation. Nothing remains, therefore, in the actual state of things, but to sustain with unabated energy and zeal all those institutions which base the encouragement of the highest learning on the recognition of equal religious liberty, and to guard with the utmost jealousy, and nurse into the healthiest activity, the two principles whose union they have consecrated. We tremble lest either of them should be sacrificed by worldly indifference on the part of those who ought to be their protectors. Should priestly influence undermine their strength and absorb their vitality, learning may still retain its name and exercise its function, but it will lose the noble front and manly bearing of a free servant of truth, and become a slave in the mill of a compelled conformity. Should the other alternative prevail, and free religion be abandoned to the charge of an ignorant and unlettered multitude, there would be nothing to mediate between vicious extremes; nothing to confront the pretensions of an established priesthood, enjoying in that case an undisputed monopoly of the forms and materials of learning; nothing to control and guide by the influence of well-disciplined intellect and solid attainment, the wild impulses of religious fervour, mistaking license for liberty, confounding violence with strength, and conferring on passionate prejudice the sanctity of reverent conviction.

ART. VII.—W. M. THACKERAY, ARTIST AND MORALIST.

The Newcomes. By the Author of "Vanity Fair," &c.

Miscellanies, Prose and Verse. By W. M. Thackeray. Vols. I. and II. London, Bradbury and Evans. 1856.

WE are not among those who believe that the "goad of contemporary criticism" has much influence either in "abating the pride" or stimulating the imagination of authors. The human system assimilates praise, and rejects censure, the latter sometimes very spasmodically. A writer or labourer of any sort rarely profits by criticism on his productions; here and there a very candid man may gather a hint; but for the most part criticism is only used by an author as a test of the good taste of his judge. It is a fiction, in fact, long religiously maintained in the forms of our reviews, that we write for the benefit of the reviewee. In most cases, and at any rate in that of a mature and established author, this didactic figment would be as well put aside. A new work, a body of writings, by a man who has attained a wide audience and

produced a considerable impression on his times, constitutes a subject for investigation; we examine it as we do other matters of interest, we analyse, we dissect, we compare notes about it; we estimate its influences; and as man is the most interesting of all studies, we examine what light it throws on the producing mind, and endeavour to penetrate from the work to some insight into the special genius of the writer;—and all this for our own pleasure and profit, not because we think our remarks will prove beneficial to him who is the subject of them. Mr. Thackeray has outgrown even the big birch-rod of quarterly criticism. A long and industrious apprenticeship to the art of letters has been rewarded by a high place in his profession. He is reaping a deserved harvest of profit and fame; he can afford to smile at censure; and praise comes to him as a tribute rather than an offering. We propose, then, simply to say what we have found in the books we have read, and what light they appear to us to throw upon the genius of the author, more particularly in the two capacities we have indicated in the heading of this article.

As an Artist, he is probably the greatest painter of manners that ever lived. He has an unapproachable quickness, fineness, and width of observation on social habits and characteristics, a memory the most delicate, and a perfectly amazing power of vividly reproducing his experience. It is customary to compare him with Addison and Fielding. He has perhaps not quite such a fine stroke as the former; but the *Spectator* is thin and meagre compared with *Vanity Fair*. Fielding has breadth and vigour incomparably greater; but two of his main excellencies, richness of accessory life and variety of character, fly to the beam when weighed against the same qualities in Thackeray. Fielding takes pride to himself because, retaining the general professional identity, he can draw a distinction between two landladies. Thackeray could make a score stand out—distinct impersonations. It is startling to look at one of his novels, and see with how many people you have been brought into connection. Examine *Pendennis*. It would take a couple of pages merely to catalogue the *dramatis personæ*; every novel brings us into contact with from fifty to a hundred new and perfectly distinct individuals.

When we speak of manners, we of course include men. Manners may be described without men; but it is lifeless, colourless work, unless they are illustrated by individual examples. Still, in painting of manners, as distinguished from painting of character, the men must always be more or less subsidiary to their clothing. Mr. Thackeray tells us of a room hung with "richly carved gilt frames (with pictures in them)." Such are the works of the social satirist and caricaturist. He puts in his figures as a nucleus for his framework. A man is used to eluci-

date and illustrate his social environment. This is less the case with Mr. Thackeray than with most artists of the same order. He might almost be said to be characterised among them by the greater use he makes of individual portraiture, as he certainly is by the fertility of his invention. Still, at bottom he is a painter of manners, not of individual men.

The social human heart, man in relation to his kind—that is his subject. His actors are distinct and individual,—truthfully, vigorously, felicitously drawn; masterpieces in their way; but the personal character of each is not the supreme object of interest with the author. It is only a contribution to a larger and more abstract subject of contemplation. Man is his study; but man the social animal, man considered with reference to the experiences, the aims, the affections, that find their field in his intercourse with his fellow-men: never man the individual soul. He never penetrates into the interior, secret, *real* life that every man leads in isolation from his fellows, that chamber of being open only upwards to heaven and downwards to hell. He is wise to abstain; he does well to hold the ground where his pre-eminence is unapproached,—to be true to his own genius. But this genius is of a lower order than the other. The faculty that deals with and represents the individual soul in its complete relations is higher than that which we have ascribed to Mr. Thackeray. There is a common confusion on this subject. We hear it advanced on the one side, that to penetrate to the hidden centre of character, and draw from thence,—which of course can only be done by imagination,—is higher than to work from the external details which can be gathered by experience and observation; and on the other hand, that it is much easier to have recourse to the imagination than to accumulate stores from a knowledge of actual life,—to draw on the fancy than to reproduce the living scene around us. The answer is not difficult. It is easier, no doubt, to produce faint vague images of character from the imagination than to sketch from the real external manifestations of life before our eyes; and easier to make such shadows pass current, just because they are shadows, and have not, like the others, the realities ready to confront them. But take a higher degree of power, and the scale turns. It is easier to be Ben Jonson, or even Goethe, than Shakespeare. In general we may say, that the less elementary the materials of his art-structure, the less imagination does the artist require, and of the less creative kind;—the architect less than the sculptor, the historian less than the poet, the novelist less than the dramatist. Reproducers of social life have generally rather a marshalling than a creative power. And in the plot and conduct of his story Mr. Thackeray does not exhibit more than a very

high power of grouping his figures and arranging his incidents ; but his best characters are certainly creations, living breathing beings, characteristic not only by certain traits, but by that atmosphere of individuality which only genius can impart. Their distinctive feature and their defect, as we have before stated, is this, that not one of them is complete ; each is only so much of an individual as is embraced in a certain abstract whole. We never know any one of them completely, in the way we know ourselves, in the way we imagine others. We know just so much of them as we can gather by an intercourse in society. Mr. Thackeray does not penetrate further ; he does not profess to show more. He says openly this is all he knows of them. He relates their behaviour, displays as much of the feelings and the character as the outward demeanour, the actions, the voice, can bear witness to, and no more. It is exactly as if you had met the people in actual life, mixed constantly with them, known them as we know our most intimate friends. Of course this is all we can *know* of a man ; but not all we can imagine, not all the artist can, if he chooses, convey to us. We don't know our nearest friends ; we are always dependent on our imagination. From the imperfect materials that observation and sympathy can furnish we construct a whole of our own, more or less conformable to the reality according to our opportunities of knowledge, and with more or less completeness and distinctness according to our imaginative faculty ; and every man, of course, is something really different from that which every man around him conceives him to be. But without this imaginative conception we should not know one another at all, we should only have disconnected hints of contemporary existence.

It is perhaps the highest distinguishing prerogative of poetry or fiction, or whatever we choose as the most comprehensive name for that art which has language for its medium, that it gives the artist the power of delineating the actual interior life and individual character of a living soul. It is the only art that does so. The dramatist and the novelist have the power of imagining a complete character, and of presenting before you their conception of it ; and the more complete this is, and the more unmistakably they can impress you with the idea of it in its fulness and in its most secret depths, the nearer they attain to the perfection of their art. Thackeray leaves the reader to his own imagination. He gives no clues to his character, as such ; he is not leading to an image of his own. He probably has a very distinct, but no complete conception of them himself ; he knows no more of them than he tells us. He is interested more in the external exhibitions of character and the feelings than in character itself ; his aim is not to reproduce any single nature, but the image that

the whole phenomenon of social life has left impressed on his mind. Of the tastes and temper that find their natural vent in this form of art he gives a picture in one of his books, which we have no doubt is lifelike.

"If he could not get a good dinner, he sate down to a bad one with entire contentment; if he could not procure the company of witty, or great, or beautiful persons, he put up with any society that came to hand; and was perfectly satisfied in a tavern parlour, or on board a Greenwich steam-boat, or in a jaunt to Hampstead with Mr. Finucane, his colleague at the Pall-Mall Gazette; or in a visit to the summer theatres across the river; or to the Royal Gardens of Vauxhall, where he was on terms of friendship with the great Simpson, and where he shook the principal comic singer or the lovely equestrian of the arena by the hand. And while he could watch the grimaces or the graces of those with a satiric humour that was not deprived of sympathy, he could look on with an eye of kindness at the lookers-on too; at the roystering youth bent upon enjoyment, and here taking it: at the honest parents, with their delighted children laughing and clapping their hands at the show: at the poor outcasts, whose laughter was less innocent, though perhaps louder, and who brought their shame and their youth here, to dance and be merry till the dawn at least; and to get bread and drown care. Of this sympathy with all conditions of men, Arthur often boasted: he was pleased to possess it: and said that he hoped thus to the last he should retain it. As another man has an ardour for art or music, or natural science, Mr. Pen said that anthropology was his favourite pursuit; and had his eyes always eagerly open to its infinite varieties and beauties: contemplating with an unflinching delight all specimens of it in all places to which he resorted, whether it was the coquetting of a wrinkled dowager in a ball room, or a high-bred young beauty blushing in her prime there; whether it was a hulking guardsman coaxing a servant-girl in the Park—or innocent little Tommy that was feeding the ducks whilst the nurse listened. And indeed a man whose heart is pretty clean can indulge in this pursuit with an enjoyment that never ceases, and is only perhaps the more keen because it is secret and has a touch of sadness in it; because he is of his mood and humour lonely, and apart although not alone."

Individual character, however, is the deeper and more interesting study; and the writings prompted by genius which delights more in the habits and qualities and casual self-delineations of man than in man himself, always disappoint us by our half-acquaintance with the personages of the story. As for the subsidiary middle-distance people, this matters little. We know as much as we wish to do of Sir Pitt Crawley, of Lord Steyne, of the Major, of Jack Belsize, of Mrs. Hobson Newcome, of Mrs. Mackenzie; but how glad should we be to see more into the real heart of Major Dobbin, of Becky, even of Osborne of Warrington, of Laura; even of shallow and worldly Pendennis, how partial and

limited, how merely external, is our conception! What do we know really of the Colonel, beyond that atmosphere of kindness and honesty which surrounds one of the most delightful creations poet ever drew? But why complain? Distinctness and completeness of conception are two qualities divided among artists; to one this, to the other that; rarely, perhaps never, has any single man been gifted with a large measure of both. If Mr. Thackeray's genius is not of the very highest order, it is the very highest of its kind. The vividness, the accuracy of his delineation goes far to compensate for a certain want of deeper insight. Let us be grateful for what he gives us, rather than grumble because it is not more. Let us take him as that which he is—a daguerreotypist of the world about us. He is great in costume, in minutiae too great; he leans too much on them; his figures are to Shakespeare's what Madame Tussaud's waxworks are to the Elgin Marbles—they are exact figures from modern life, and the resemblance is effected somewhat too much by the aid of externals; but there is a matchless sharpness, an elaborateness and finish of detail and circumstantiality about his creations. He has an art peculiarly his own of reproducing every-day language with just enough additional sparkle or humour or pathos of his own to make it piquant and entertaining without losing vraisemblance. His handling of his subject, his execution, are so skilful and masterly, that they for ever hold the attention alive. He takes a commonplace and makes a novelty of it, as a potter makes a jug out of a lump of clay by turning it round in his hands; he tells you page after page of ordinary incident with the freshness of a perennial spring. He is master of the dramatic method which has of late preponderated so much over the narrative. Perhaps the greatest attraction of his writings consists in the wonderful appropriateness of the language and sentiments he puts into the mouths of his various characters; and he not only makes them express themselves, but he manages, without any loss of dramatic propriety, to heighten the tone so as to give some charm or other to what every one says; and not only this, but with an ease which veils consummate dexterity, he makes these dramatic speeches carry on the action and even convey the author's private *inuen*do. He has no scruple about this. He alters a woman's thought just enough to make it the vehicle for a sarcasm of his own.

"On this the two ladies went through the osculatory ceremony which they were in the habit of performing, and Mrs. Pendennis got a great secret comfort from the little quarrel, for Laura's confession seemed to say: 'That girl can never be a wife for Pen, for she is light-minded and heartless, and quite unworthy of our noble hero. He will be sure to find out her unworthiness for his own part, and then he will be saved from this flighty creature and awake out of his delusion.'"

If the power of producing the impression of reality were the test of the highest creative power, Thackeray would perhaps rank higher than any one who has ever lived,—higher than Defoe. But Thackeray's mode of creating an impression of reality is more complicated than Defoe's. It is not that simple act of force by which the latter identifies himself with his hero. It arises in great measure from his way of knitting his narrative on at every point to some link of our every-day experience. His fiction is like a net, every mesh of which has a connecting knot with actual life. Many novelists have a world of their own they inhabit. Thackeray thrusts his characters in among the moving every-day world in which we live. We don't say they are life-like characters; they are mere people. We feel them to be near us, and that we may meet them any day. Dickens creates a race of beings united to us by common sympathies and affections, endeared to us by certain qualities, and infinitely amusing in their eccentricities. Still, we all know perfectly well they are not really human beings; though they are enough so for his purpose and ours. No one supposes that Carker ever really rode on that bay horse of his to the city with those shining teeth; that Traddle's hair really had power to force open a pocket-book. We know that the trial of Bardell *v.* Pickwick is an imaginary contribution to our judicial records, and that Edith Dombey exists only in highflown language and the exigencies of melodrama. But the Major frequents Bond Street, Mrs. Hobson Newcome's virtue is a thing of this life and of London, and it is but one step from questioning the existence of Becky's finished little house in Curzon Street to admitting the philosophy of Berkeley. All artists have an ultimate aim which shapes their working. Miss Bronte wishes to depict marked character; Dickens bends himself to elicit the humorous element in things; Bulwer supposes that he has a philosophy to develop; Disraeli sets himself to be himself admired. Thackeray only desires to be a mirror, to give a true but a brilliant reflection; his vision is warped, no doubt, by peculiarities of his own; but his aim is to reproduce the world as he sees it.

His conception of a story is, like his conception of a character, incomplete. There is no reason why he should begin where he does, no reason why he should end at all. He cuts a square out of life, just as much as he wants, and sends it to Bradbury and Evans. In *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis* the characters are at large, and might at any moment be gathered in to a conclusion. The *Newcomes* begins with the history of Clive's grandfather, and the reasons are independent of art which cause it to conclude before the death of his grandchildren. This, however, is little more than a technical shortcoming, and certainly does not much affect

the reader, to whom skill in the conduct of the story is infinitely more important. And in the conduct of his story, in the management of his narrative, in the interlinking of incident, the way in which one character is made to elucidate another, in which every speech and every entrance carries on the action, in the ease, the grace, the hidden skill with which the intricate complication of interests and events are handled and developed, Mr. Thackeray justly claims our highest admiration. In all that belongs to execution he shows a mastery that almost makes us think he has some secret peculiar power, so effortless is his brilliancy, so easy his touch. His tale is like a landscape growing under the instinctive rather than conscious hand of a master.

The novelist who draws the external life of men is subject to this disadvantage: he is more dependent on his experience than the one who makes individual character his end. It is true, we apprehend, that a poet can, by the force of imagination, and the excitement of particular parts of his nature so as to produce temporary identification, create a character which he has never seen. Goethe bears witness to the fact in his own case. He tells us he drew in his youth characters of which he had no experience, and the truthfulness of which was justified by his mature observation. His evidence is peculiarly valuable, both because no man estimated observation higher, and because his great skill in it would enable him to apply an adequate test to the accuracy of the delineations which he speaks of as springing ready-formed from the resources of his own nature. Of course, even granting that a man could be entirely independent of observation in his conception of a character, he would still require it in order to find a field for the display of that conception; and the more knowledge he commands, the better can he develop his idea. Less, however, will suffice for such an artist than for one who works like Thackeray or Fielding. These are absolutely bounded by the limits of their observation, and consequently in constant danger of self-repetition. Mr. Thackeray is remarkable rather for his exhaustless ingenuity in making the most of the knowledge he possesses than for any very wide range. His fertility becomes the more remarkable when we survey the resources on which he draws. His field is not an extensive one. He stands on the debatable land between the aristocracy and the middle classes—that is his favourite position—and he has evidently observed this form of life mainly from dining-rooms and drawing-rooms. He surveys mankind from the club-room and from country-houses; he has seen soldiers chiefly at mess-dinners; is not familiar with lawyers, though he is with the Temple; has seen a good deal of a painter's life, and must of course have had a consider-

able knowledge of the professional world of letters, though he is shy of profiting by this experience. He is not at home in provincial life in England, especially town-life, nor has he any extensive acquaintance with the feelings and habits of the lower classes. His knowledge of men about town is profound, exhaustive; his acquaintance among footmen vast. He may have more materials in store; but he begins to indicate a check in the extent of his resources. We know the *carte-du-pays* pretty well now, and have a notion where the boundary-fence runs. The extraordinary thing is the immense variety of the surface within it.

There is one direction, however, in which Mr. Thackeray's resources have always been remarkably limited. It is curious how independent he is of thought; how he manages to exist so entirely on the surface of things. Perhaps he is the better observer of manners because he never cares to penetrate below them. He never refers to a principle, or elucidates a rule of action. But this latter is a characteristic which belongs rather to his character as a moralist than an artist. What we are now concerned with is the absence from his books of what we are accustomed to call ideas. In this respect Thackeray is as inferior to Fielding, as in some others we cannot help thinking him superior. Fielding, you cannot help seeing as you read, was a reflecting man; you feel that his writings are backed by a body of thought, though it is far from an intrusive element in them. Defoe always leaves the impression of an active, vigorous intellect. The force of Thackeray's writings is derived from the strength of his feelings; great genius he has, and general vigour of mind, but not the *intellectus cogitabundus*. Read his charming and eloquent Lectures on the Humorists. You would suppose that thought would ooze out there if any where; but there is no trace of it. He simply states his impressions about the men; and when he speaks of their personal characters, every deference is to be paid to the conception of one who has so sensitive an apprehension of the distinguishing traits of various natures. We are far from wishing for a change in the method of the book; we believe the sort of quiet meditative way in which Mr. Thackeray touches and feels about and probes these men is more valuable and instructive than any elaborate reasonings on them would be, and infinitely better calculated to convey just impressions of what they really were like. But the omission of thought is not the less a characteristic feature; and on one of the pages, where a note of Coleridge is appended to Thackeray's estimate of Sterne, it is curious to see two such utterly opposite modes of approaching a subject brought into juxtaposition. Thackeray never reasons, he never gains one step by deduction; he

relies on his instincts, he appeals to the witness within us; he makes his statement, and leaves it to find its own way to the conviction of his readers; either it approves itself to you, and you accept it, or it does not, and you leave it. The highest moral truths have been thus enunciated, perhaps can only be thus enunciated; but Mr. Thackeray does not enunciate great truths. The most he does is to generalise on his social observation. He is not absolutely destitute of some of those distilled results of a wide knowledge of men which properly come under the head of wisdom; but they are very disproportioned to the extent and penetration of his perception. He occupies a good deal of space in half-meditative, half-emotional harangues on the phenomena of life. Where these do not immediately deal with the affections, they owe their novelty and value to their form alone; and it would not be difficult to enumerate his chief ideas, and count how often they occur. He impresses on us very constantly that "the Peerage" is the Upas-book of English society; that our servants sit in judgment on us below stairs; that good wages make a better nurse than love; that bankers marry earls' daughters, and *vice versa*; that the pangs of disappointed passion stop short of death; that no man making a schedule of his debts ever included them all. We need not go through the list; and trite as such sayings seem when stripped bare for enumeration, the author for ever invests them with some fresh charm of expression or illustration, which goes far to preserve them from becoming wearisome. It is with the feelings and the affections that Mr. Thackeray is at home. They supply with him the place of reasoning-power. Hence he penetrates deeper into the characters of women than of men. He has never drawn, nor can he ever draw, a man of strong convictions or thoughtful mind; and even in women he deals almost exclusively with the instinctive and emotional side of their nature. This feature gives a certain thinness and superficiality to Mr. Thackeray's works. He nowhere leaves the mark of a thinker. Even his insight is keen and delicate rather than profound. But his deep and tender feeling makes him sensitive to those suggestions which occupy the boundary-land between the affections and the intellect, the country of vain regrets and tender memories, of chastened hopes and softened sadness, the harvest-field in every human soul of love and death. The voice of Mr. Thackeray's tenderness is at once sweet and manly; and when he will allow us to feel sure he is not sneering at himself, its tone is not unworthy to speak to the most sacred recesses of the heart.

"Do we wish to apologise for Pen because he has got a white hat, and because his mourning for his mother is fainter? All the lapse of years, all the career of fortune, all the events of life, however

strongly they may move or eagerly excite him, never can remove that sainted image from his heart, or banish that blessed love from its sanctuary. If he yields to wrong, the dear eyes will look sadly upon him when he dares to meet them; if he does well, endures pain, or conquers temptation, the ever-present love will greet him, he knows, with approval and pity; if he falls, plead for him; if he suffers, cheer him;—be with him and accompany him always until death is past, and sorrow and sin are no more. Is this mere dreaming, or, on the part of an idle story-teller, useless moralising? May not the man of the world take his moment, too, to be grave and thoughtful? Ask of your own hearts and memories, brother and sister, if we do not live in the dead; and (to speak reverently) prove God by love?"

Is there in the range of fiction any thing more touching than the conception which took the shattered heart of the old Colonel to rest among the pensioners of Grey Friars?

Mr. Thackeray's pathos is good; but his humour is better, more original, more searching. He never rests in the simply ludicrous or absurd. Irony is the essence of his wit. His books are one strain of it. He plays with his own characters. In the simplest things they say the author himself gets a quiet back-stroke at them. It is not enough for him to depict a man ridiculous, he makes him himself expose his own absurdities, and gathers a zest from the unconsciousness with which he does so. He treats his *dramatis personæ* as if he were playing off real men. His wit is not a plaything, but a weapon, and must cut something whenever it falls; it may be a goodnatured blow, but it must touch some one. He never fences against the wall. His satire is most bitter when he is most cool. He is skilful in the management of sneer and inuendo, and can strike a heavy blow with a light weapon. For his broadest absurdities he chooses the form of burlesque, and then he likes to have a definite something to parody. He is one who does not laugh at his own story. It is not often he makes his reader laugh; but he can do it if he will. Foker is the best of his more laughable creations. In general he is grave, composed, even sad, but he is never uninterested in the personal adventures he is engaged in narrating; his sympathies are always keenly alive, though often he prefers to conceal how they are enlisted. At bottom he has a warm, almost a passionate interest in his own creations. They are realities to him as to the rest of the world.

His peculiar powers must tempt him to personality, but in any open form of it he does not now indulge. The early days of Blackwood and Fraser are gone by. There was a time, however, when he gave "Sawedwadgeorgeccarlittbulwig" a very severe, though not ungenerous shaking; and when himself attacked by the *Times* he turned and bit fiercely and sharply. He

is apt to wear the forms of his wit to tatters. Jeames, with his peculiar dialect, in the *Yellowplush Papers* and elsewhere, was entertaining and instructive, but has been allowed to grow wearisome. Orthographical absurdity is an exhaustible subject of merriment, and Mr. Thackeray's wit is somewhat too much dependent on his nice appreciation of distinctions of pronunciation, and the slavish subserviency he compels from the art of spelling. He can mimic in print as well or better than Dickens. His sense of humour differs from that of the latter, however, in being almost exclusively called forth by the peculiarities of persons themselves, or personal relations. He very rarely is struck with the ludicrous in things alone, as Dickens often is; his description of Costigan's hairbrush, as "a wonderful and ancient piece," stands almost by itself; he rarely even makes fun out of a man's personal appearance, except so far as his dress or air indicate some mental trait or characteristic. The mode of his caricaturing, too, is quite different. Dickens collects all the absurdities and laughter-moving elements in a thing, and heaps them together in a new image of his own. Thackeray pictures the thing as it is, only bringing out its ludicrous or contemptible features into sharp relief.

His genius does not lead him to the poetic form; he has just that command of verse which one would expect from a man of his great ability; he can make an able use of it, and his power of language gives him great command of rhyme and sufficient facility. His verses are generally reproductions; free renderings from another language with new point and application, parodies or humorous narratives of actual incident. Among these the "Chronicle of the Drum" is the best. It is thoroughly French, dramatic, and spirit-stirring. "Jacob Homnium's Hoss" far surpasses all his other humorous efforts in verse. It will bear recalling; and we will quote it as a specimen at once of his rhyming powers, his dexterously ridiculous orthography, and his wit, for it is not easy to give a prose extract to exemplify the character of the latter. He is too good an artist to let it stand in lumps,—he uses it as the gilding of his whole narrative.

JACOB HOMNIUM'S HOSS.

A NEW PALLICE-COURT CHAUNT.

One sees in Viteall Yard,
Vere pleacemen do resort,
A venerable hinstitute,
'Tis call'd the Pallis Court:
A gent as got his i on it;
I think 'twill make some sport.

The natur of this Court
My hindignation riles :
A few fat legal spiders
Here sit & spin their viles ;
To rob the town theyr privilege is,
In a hayrea of twelve miles.

The Judge of this year Court
Is a mellitary beak,
He knows no more of Lor
Than praps he does of Greek,
And provides hisself a deputy
Because he cannot speak.

Four counsel in this Court—
Misnamed of Justice—sits ;
These lawyers owes their places to
Their money, not their wits ;
And there's six attornies under them,
As here their living gits.

These lawyers, six and four,
Was a livin at their ease,
A sendin of their writs abowt,
And droring in the fees,
When their erose a cirkimstance
As is like to make a breeze.

It now is some monce since,
A gent both good and trew
Possest an ansum oss vith vich
He didn know what to do :
Peraps he did not like the oss,
Peraps he was a scru.

This gentleman his oss
At Tattersall's did lodge ;
There came a vulgar oss-dealer,
This gentleman's name did fodge,
And took the oss from Tattersall's :
Wasn that a artful dodge ?

One day this gentleman's groom
This willain did spy out
A mounted on this oss,
A ridin him about ;
"Get out of that there oss, you rogue,"
Speaks up the groom so stout.

The thief was cruel whex'd
To find hisself so pinn'd ;
The oss began to whinny,
The honest groom he grinn'd ;
And the raskle thief got off the oss,
And cut away like vind.

And phansy with what joy
The master did regard
His dearly bluvd lost oss again
Trot in the stable yard !

Who was this master good
 Of whom I makes these rhymes?
 His name is Jacob Homnium, Esquire;
 And if I'd committed crimes,
 Good Lord! I wouldn't ave that mann
 Attack me in the *Times*!

Now shortly after, the groomb
 His master's oss did take up,
 There came a livery-man
 This gentleman to wake up;
 And he handed in a little bill,
 Which hanger'd Mr. Jacob.

For two pound seventeen
 This livery-man eplied,
 For the keep of Mr. Jacob's oss,
 Which the thief had took to ride.
 "Do you see anythink green in me?"
 Mr. Jacob Homnium cried.

"Because a raskle chews
 My oss away to robb,
 And goes tick at your Mews
 For seven-and-fifty bobb,
 Shall I be call'd to pay?—It is
 A iniquitious Jobb."

Thus Mr. Jacob cut
 The convasation short;
 The livery-man went ome,
 Detummingd to ave sport,
 And summingsd Jacob Homnium, Esquire,
 Into the Pallis Court.

Pore Jacob went to Court,
 A Counsel for to fix,
 And choose a barrister out of the four,
 An attorney of the six;
 And there he sor these men of Lor,
 And watch'd 'em at their tricks.

The dreadful day of trile
 In the Pallis Court did come;
 The lawyers said their say,
 The Judge look'd verry glum,
 And then the British Jury cast
 Pore Jacob Hom-ni-um.

O a weary day was that
 For Jacob to go through;
 The debt was two seventeen
 (Which he no mor owed than you),
 And then there was the plaintives costs,
 Eleven pound six and two.

And then there was his own,
 Which t'c lawyers they did fix
 At the verry moderit figgar
 Of ten pound one and six.

Now Evins bless the Pallis Court,
And all its bold ver-dicks !

I cannot settingly tell
If Jacob swaw and cust,
At aving for to pay this sumb,
But I should think he must,
And av drawn a cheque for 24/. 4s. 8d.
With most igstreme disgust.

* * * *

His sense of beauty is warm and lively. If he had as much of the negative sense of good taste which discards the ugly and jarring elements as he has of the positive sense which detects and appreciates the beautiful, his works would be far pleasanter reading. He sees beauty every where ; his love of it mingles with the affectionateness of his nature, and throws a softening grace over his pages, relieving a bitterness which without it would sometimes be scarcely sufferable. Though his genius leads him to deal with men, external nature has no light charms for him. He does not often paint landscape, but he can do so in brief exquisite touches. Most of us are familiar with some such a German scene as this :

“ Pleasant Rhine gardens ! Fair scenes of peace and sunshine ; noble purple mountains, whose crests are reflected in the magnificent stream ; who has ever seen you that has not a grateful memory of those scenes of friendly repose and beauty ? To lay down the pen, and even to think of that beautiful Rhineland, makes one happy. At this time of summer-evening the cows are trooping down from the hills, lowing, and with their bells tinkling, to the old town, with its old moats, and gates, and spires, and chestnut-trees, with long blue shadows stretching over the grass ; the sky and the river below flame in crimson and gold ; and the moon is already out, looking pale towards the sunset. The sun sinks behind the great castle-crested mountains ; the night falls suddenly ; the river grows darker and darker ; lights quiver in it from the windows in the old ramparts, and twinkle peacefully in the villages under the hills on the opposite shore.”

Of his bad taste his works furnish only too abundant evidence. It was a happy idea to look at society from the footman's point of view ; but a very little of that sort of fun suffices. And Mr. Thackeray does not scruple to surfeit us. We have rough Warrington's excellent authority for the assertion, that “ Mrs. Flanagan the laundress, and Betty the housemaid, are not the company a gentleman should choose for permanent association ;” and we are not surprised at that “ most igstrosinary” burst of indignation with which Jeames's career draws to its close in the *Yellowplush Papers*.

The advantage of using such a mouthpiece, if it be an advan-

tage, is this, that it gives an opportunity of saying things more vulgar, biting, and personal, than a man's self-respect or shame would allow him to say out of his own mouth. It is a *quasi* shifting of the responsibility. But if we give Sheridan credit for his wit, we must give Thackeray credit for his vulgarity. This feature greatly disfigures his works, and shows itself not only in the gusto and ease with which he enters into the soul of a footman, but in a love of searching out and bringing into prominent view the more petty and ignoble sides of all things. We don't quarrel with a humorist for exposing the vulgar element in a vulgar man, and in taking all the fun he can out of it. Self-delineative dramatic vulgarity, used in moderation, is one of the fairest and readiest sources of laughter. What we quarrel with is vulgarity in the tone of the work; a charge for which it is not very easy to cite chapter and verse, as it is a thing which is felt by the instinct rather than detected by observation; but we will adduce one instance of the sort of thing we allude to. In the first volume of *The Newcomes* we are told how Warrington and Pendennis gave a little entertainment at the Temple, including among their guests little Rosey and her mother. It is a very pleasant charming picture, and the narrator speaks of the "merry songs and kind faces," the "happy old dingy chambers illuminated by youthful sunshine." What unhappy prompting, then, makes him drop this blot on his description: "I may say, without false modesty, that our little entertainment was most successful. The champagne was iced to a nicety. The ladies did not perceive that our laundress, Mrs. Flanagan, was intoxicated very early in the afternoon." And before the end of the description we are not spared another allusion to "Mrs. Flanagan in a state of excitement." It is vulgar, surely, to mar the pure and pleasant impression of the scene with this image of the drunken laundress not only introduced, but insisted on.

Not from false taste, but from something deeper,—a warp in the very substance of his genius,—arises another unwelcome characteristic. *Vanity Fair* is the name, not of one, but of all Mr. Thackeray's books. The disappointment that waits upon human desires, whether in their fulfilment or their destruction, the emptiness of worldly things, the frailty of the affections, the sternness of fate, the hopelessness of endeavour, *vanitas vanitatum*,—these are his themes. The impression left by his books is that of weariness; the stimulants uphold you while you read; and then comes just such a reaction as if you had really mingled closely in the great world with no hopes or ambitions outside it; you feel the dust in your throat, the din and the babbling echo in your ears. Art may touch the deepest sources of passion: awe and grief and almost terror are as much within her province as laughter and calm;

she may shake the heart, and leave it quivering with emotions whose intensity partakes of pain; but to make it unsatisfied, restless, anxious,—this is not her province. To steep it in the turmoil, the harass, the perpetual shortcomings of actual life, may possibly be sometimes permissible. But this must only be for a brief period—it is a very exceptional source of excitement; and to drop the curtain and leave the mind jaded with small discontents, perplexed with unsolved difficulties, and saddened with the shortcomings of fruition,—this is to be false to the high and soothing influences of art, and to misuse the power she gives. Those old story-books show a deeper sense of her true province who marry a couple and tell us they lived happily till they died, than Mr. Thackeray, who cannot forbear from turning over one more page to show us the long-beloved and hardly-won Amelia scarcely sufficing to her husband, and who brings back the noble-hearted Laura to teach us that she cannot escape the consequences to her own demeanour and character of having married a man so far inferior to herself.

As a Moralist, his philosophy might be called a religious stoicism rooted in fatalism. The stoicism is patient and manly; kindly though melancholy. It is not a hardened endurance of adverse fate, so much as an unexamining inactive submission to the divine will. This temper pervades his writings, and he has sung its gentler mood in a sweet autumnal, not hopeless exactly but hope-ignoring, strain:

“ We bow to Heaven, that will'd it so,
That darkly rules the fate of all;
That sends the respite or the blow,
That's free to give, or to recall.
This crowns his feast with wine and wit:
Who brought him to that mirth and state?
His betters, see, below him sit,
Or hunger hopeless at the gate.
Who bade the mud from Dives' wheel
To spurn the rags of Lazarus?
Come, brother, in that dust we'll kneel,
Confessing Heaven that ruled it thus.
So each shall mourn, in life's advance,
Dear hopes, dear friends, untimely kill'd;
Shall grieve for many a forfeit chance,
And longing passion unfulfilled.
Amen! whatever fate be sent,
Pray God the heart may kindly glow,
Although the head with cares be bent,
And whitened with the winter snow.
Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the Awful Will;
And bear it with an honest heart,

Who misses, or who wins the prize.
 Go, lose or conquer as you can ;
 But if you fail, or if you rise,
 Be each, pray God, a gentleman."

His fatalism is connected with a strong sense of the powerlessness of the human will. He is a profound sceptic. Not a sceptic in religious conviction, or one who ignores devotional feeling,—far from it; but a sceptic of principles, of human will, of the power in man to ascertain his duties or direct his aims. He believes in God *out of the world*. He loves to represent man as tossing on the wild sea, driven to and fro by wind and waves, landing now on some shining fortunate isle, where the affections find happy rest, and now driven forth again into the night and storm; consoled and strengthened now and then by the bright gleams above him; dexterous with his helm to avoid or conquer the adverse elements; but destitute of all knowledge of navigation, and with no port to steer for and no compass to guide his course. Pleasure, he tells you, may and perhaps should be plucked while you are young; but he warns you the zest will fail; he warns you that gratified ambition will taste like ashes in the mouth, that fame is a delusion, that the affections, the sole good of life, are often helpless under the foot of adverse fortune, and neither so powerful nor so permanent as we dream; and he can only recommend you to enjoy honestly, to suffer bravely, and to wear a patient face. He speaks to you as one fellow-subject to another of the Prince of this world. He has no call to set things right, no prompting to examine into the remedy. His vocation is to show the time as it is, and especially where it is out of joint. His philosophy is to accept men and things as they are.

He is a very remarkable instance of the mode in which the force of the intellect affects the moral nature and convictions. We apprehend he never asked "why?" in his life, except perhaps to prove to another that he had no because. With a very strong sense of the obligation of moral truthfulness, and the profoundest respect for, and sympathy with, simplicity and straightforwardness of character, he has no interest in intellectual conclusions. He would never have felt sufficient interest to ask with Pilate, "What is truth?" Always occupied with moral symptoms, intently observing men, and deeply interested in their various modes of meeting the perplexities of life, he never attempts to decide a moral question. He rarely discusses one at all; and when he does so, he is studiously careful to avoid throwing his weight into either scale. Elsewhere ready enough to show in his proper person, he here shrinks anxiously out of sight. Sometimes he warns you expressly he will not be respon-

sible for what he is putting into the mouth of one of his characters ; or more often he treats the subject like a shuttlecock, raps it to and fro between two dramatic disputants, and lets it fall in the middle for those to pick up who list.

From this form of mind springs, in great measure, that scepticism to which we have alluded. A writer can scarcely help being sceptical who sees all sides of a question, but has gathered no principles to help him to choose among them ; who has no guiding rules to which to refer, and whose instincts alone prevent the field of his conscience from being an absolute chaos. Only by these instincts he tests the characters of men and the propriety of actions ; and wherever they alone can serve as guides, they do so faithfully, for in him they are honest and noble.

The best possible exposition of this turn of mind is that which Mr. Thackeray has put into the mouth of Pendennis ; and if, in spite of the quasi disclaimer of it, we take it as a more or less fair expression of the author's own spirit, it is because it accords closely with other marks of it scattered throughout his works.

“ ‘ A little while since, young one,’ Warrington said, who had been listening to his friend's confessions neither without sympathy nor scorn, for his mood led him to indulge in both, ‘ you asked me why I remained out of the strife of the world, and looked on at the great labour of my neighbour without taking any part in the struggle ? Why, what a mere dilettante you own yourself to be, in this confession of general scepticism, and what a listless spectator yourself ! You are six-and-twenty years old, and as *blasé* as a rake of sixty. You neither hope much, nor care much, nor believe much. You doubt about other men as much as about yourself. Were it made of such *pococuranti* as you, the world would be intolerable ; and I had rather live in a wilderness of monkeys, and listen to their chatter, than in a company of men who denied every thing.’

“ ‘ Were the world composed of Saint Bernards or Saint Dominics, it would be equally odious,’ said Pen ; ‘ and at the end of a few score years would cease to exist altogether. Would you have every man with his head shaved, and every woman in a cloister,—carrying out to the full the ascetic principle ? Would you have conventicle-hymns twanging from every lane in every city in the world ? Would you have all the birds of the forest sing one note and fly with one feather ? You call me a sceptic because I acknowledge what is ; and in acknowledging that, be it linnet or lark, or priest or parson ; be it, I mean, any single one of the infinite varieties of the creatures of God (whose very name I would be understood to pronounce with reverence, and never to approach but with distant awe), I say that the study and acknowledgment of that variety amongst men especially increases our respect and wonder for the Creator, Commander, and Ordainer of all these minds, so different and yet so united,—meeting in a common adoration, and offering up, each according to his degree and means of approaching the Divine

centre, his acknowledgment of praise and worship, each singing (to recur to the bird-simile) his natural song.'

" 'And so, Arthur, the hymn of a saint, or the ode of a poet, or the chant of a Newgate thief, are all pretty much the same in your philosophy,' said George.

" 'Even that sneer could be answered were it to the point,' Pendennis replied; 'but it is not; and it could be replied to you, that even to the wretched outcry of the thief on the tree, the wisest and the best of all teachers we know of, the untiring Comforter and Consoler, promised a pitiful hearing and a certain hope. Hymns of saints! Odes of poets! who are we to measure the chances and opportunities, the means of doing, or even judging, right and wrong, awarded to men; and to establish the rule for meting out their punishments and rewards? We are as insolent and unthinking in judging of men's morals as of their intellects. We admire this man as being a great philosopher, and set down the other as a dullard, not knowing either, or the amount of truth in either, or being certain of the truth any where. We sing *Te Deum* for this hero who has won a battle, and *De profundis* for that other one who has broken out of prison, and has been caught afterwards by the policemen. Our measure of rewards and punishments is most partial and incomplete, absurdly inadequate, utterly worldly; and we wish to continue it into the next world. Into that next and awful world we strive to pursue men, and send after them our impotent party verdicts of condemnation or acquittal. We set up our paltry little rods to measure Heaven immeasurable, as if, in comparison to that, Newton's mind, or Pascal's, or Shakspeare's, was any loftier than mine; as if the ray which travels from the sun would reach me sooner than the man who blacks my boots. Measured by that altitude, the tallest and the smallest among us are so alike diminutive and pitifully base, that I say we should take no count of the calculation, and it is a meanness to reckon the difference.'

" 'Your figure fails there, Arthur,' said the other, better pleased; 'if even by common arithmetic we can multiply as we can reduce almost infinitely, the Great Reckoner must take count of all: and the small is not small, or the great great, to his infinity.'

" 'I don't call those calculations in question,' Arthur said; 'I only say that yours are incomplete and premature; false in consequence, and, by every operation, multiplying into wider error. I do not condemn the men who killed Socrates and damned Galileo. I say that they damned Galileo and killed Socrates.' * * * * *

"In these speculations and confessions of Arthur, the reader may perhaps see allusions to questions which, no doubt, have occupied and discomposed himself, and which he may have answered by very different solutions to those come to by our friend. We are not pledging ourselves for the correctness of his opinions, which readers will please to consider are delivered dramatically, the writer being no more answerable for them, than for the sentiments uttered by any other character of the story: our endeavour is merely to follow out, in its progress, the development of the mind of a worldly and selfish, but not ungenerous

or unkind or truth-avoiding man. And it will be seen that the lamentable stage to which his logic at present has brought him, is one of general scepticism and sneering acquiescence in the world as it is ; or if you like so to call it, a belief qualified with scorn in all things extant. The tastes and habits of such a man prevent him from being a boisterous demagogue, and his love of truth and dislike of cant keep him from advancing crude propositions, such as many loud reformers are constantly ready with ; much more of uttering downright falsehoods in arguing questions or abusing opponents, which he would die or starve rather than use. It was not in our friend's nature to be able to utter certain lies ; nor was he strong enough to protest against others, except with a polite sneer ; his maxim being, that he owed obedience to all acts of parliament, as long as they were not repealed.

"And to what does this easy and sceptical life lead a man ? Friend Arthur was a Sadducee, and the Baptist might be in the Wilderness shouting to the poor, who were listening with all their might and faith to the preacher's awful accents and denunciations of wrath or woe or salvation ; and our friend the Sadducee would turn his sleek mule with a shrug and a smile from the crowd, and go home to the shade of his terrace, and muse over preacher and audience, and turn to his roll of Plato, or his pleasant Greek song-book babbling of honey and Hybla, and nymphs and fountains of love. To what, we say, does this scepticism lead ? It leads a man to a shameful loneliness and selfishness, so to speak—the more shameful, because it is so good-humoured and conscienceless and serene. Conscience ! What is conscience ? Why accept remorse ? What is public or private faith ? Mythuses alike enveloped in enormous tradition. If, seeing and acknowledging the lies of the world, Arthur, as see them you can with only too fatal a clearness, you submit to them without any protest farther than a laugh : if, plunged yourself in easy sensuality, you allow the whole wretched world to pass groaning by you unmoved : if the fight for the truth is taking place, and all men of honour are on the ground armed on the one side or the other, and you alone are to lie on your balcony and smoke your pipe out of the noise and the danger,—you had better have died, or never have been at all, than such a sensual coward.

"'The truth, friend !' Arthur said, imperturbably ; 'where is the truth ? Show it me. That is the question between us. I see it on both sides. I see it in the Conservative side of the house, and amongst the Radicals, and even on the Ministerial benches. I see it in this man who worships by act of parliament, and is rewarded with a silk apron and five thousand a year ; in that man, who, driven fatally by the remorseless logic of his creed, gives up every thing, friends, fame, dearest ties, closest vanities, the respect of an army of churchmen, the recognised position of a leader, and passes over, truth-impelled, to the enemy, in whose ranks he is ready to serve henceforth as a nameless private soldier :—I see the truth in that man, as I do in his brother, whose logic drives him to quite a different conclusion, and who, after having passed a life in vain endeavours to reconcile an irreconcilable book, flings it at last down in despair, and declares, with tearful eyes, and

hands up to heaven, his revolt and recantation. If the truth is with all these, why should I take side with any one of them? Some are called upon to preach: let them preach. Of these preachers there are somewhat too many, methinks, who fancy they have the gift. But we cannot all be parsons in church, that is clear. Some must sit silent, and listen, or go to sleep mayhap. Have we not all our duties? The head charity-boy blows the bellows; the master canes the other boys in the organ-loft; the clerk sings out Amen from the desk; and the beadle with the staff opens the door for his Reverence, who rustles in silk up to the cushion. I won't cane the boys, nay, or say Amen always, or act as the church's champion or warrior, in the shape of the beadle with the staff; but I will take off my hat in the place, and say my prayers there too, and shake hands with the clergyman as he steps on the grass outside. Don't I know that his being there is a compromise, and that he stands before me an act of parliament? That the church he occupies was built for other worship? That the Methodist chapel is next door; and that Bunyan the tinker is bawling out the tidings of damnation on the common hard by? Yes, I am a Sadducee; and I take things as I find them, and the world, and the acts of parliament of the world, as they are."

On which side is the author? On neither, or rather on both. He thinks Arthur very wrong, and is not sure he has not the best of the argument. *Pendennis* is throughout the least agreeable of Mr. Thackeray's fictions. A work more purposeless, or one in which all grounds of action and elements of judgment are more distorted and confused, it is scarcely possible to imagine. Arthur Pendennis is represented as a young man of warm impetuous feelings, a lively intellect, much self-conceit, and a natural selfishness of disposition fostered by early indulgence. The highest and sole attractive points in his character are a sense of honour and a capacity for love. In early youth he is carried away by an impetuous passion for an uneducated woman, whose beauty is her sole attraction. Forcibly weaned from his first devotion, he goes to college, where his sole ambition is for social display, and where he falls a victim to his vanity and weakness. Returning home, he idles away some time, entangling himself more or less with a clever wicked little flirt in the neighbourhood. He goes to London, takes to review-writing as a means of support, strives to write honestly; has written a novel, dresses it up for the public, publishes it, and gains a reputation by it; moves meanwhile, by the interest of his uncle—a thorough man of the world and of the clubs—among high circles of fashionable life, and loves to study them and all other forms of life; lives in every way—in earning his maintenance, in intellect, in emotion—from hand to mouth; has no ambition, no convictions, and is utterly destitute of any object in life and of any incitement to action beyond the

temporary requisitions or the chance stimulants of the day. And thus Mr. Thackeray moralises on his life :

" Was Pendennis becoming worldly, or only seeing the world, or both ? and is a man very wrong for being after all only a man ? Which is the most reasonable, and does his duty best : he who stands aloof from the struggle of life, calmly contemplating it, or he who descends to the ground, and takes his part in the contest ? ' That philosopher,' Pen said, ' had held a great place amongst the leaders of the world, and enjoyed to the full what it had to give of rank and riches, renown and pleasure, who came, weary-hearted, out of it, and said that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. Many a teacher of those whom we reverence, and who steps out of his carriage up to his carved cathedral place, shakes his lawn ruffles over the velvet cushion, and cries out, that the whole struggle is an accursed one, and the works of the world are evil. Many a conscience-stricken mystic flies from it altogether, and shuts himself out from it within convent-walls (real or spiritual), whence he can only look up to the sky, and contemplate the heaven out of which there is no rest and no good.

" ' But the earth, where our feet are, is the work of the same Power as the immeasurable blue yonder, in which the future lies into which we would peer. Who ordered toil as the condition of life, ordered weariness, ordered sickness, ordered poverty, failure, success—to this man a foremost place, to the other a nameless struggle with the crowd—to that a shameful fall, or paralysed limb, or sudden accident—to each some work upon the ground he stands on, until he is laid beneath it.' While they were talking, the dawn came shining through the windows of the room, and Pen threw them open to receive the fresh morning-air. ' Look, George,' said he ; ' look and see the sun rise : he sees the labourer on his way a-field ; the work-girl plying her poor needle ; the lawyer at his desk, perhaps ; the beauty smiling asleep upon her pillow of down ; or the jaded reveller reeling to bed ; or the fevered patient tossing on it ; or the doctor watching by it, over the throes of the mother for the child that is to be born into the world :—to be born and to take his part in the suffering and struggling, the tears and laughter, the crime, remorse, love, folly, sorrow, rest.' "

Pendennis was decidedly becoming worldly, and was very far from being what every man ought to be, and what most men, let us hope, are in at least some higher degree than he was. But Mr. Thackeray must not argue as if we were in danger of charging him with worldliness because he went down into the battle of life and accepted his place among those conditions which the divine wisdom has appointed for the activity of man. It is not this that makes him worldly, but because he has no life and no interests above this struggle to ennoble and give a meaning to it. Because he floats down the stream aimless, and with no thought beyond the momentary excitements of the rapid course. Because he is utterly immersed in worldly interests and worldly enjoy-

ments; because his ends, as far as he can be said to have any, as well as his activity, are worldly. This is why we condemn Pendennis. Following this life, he comes accidentally across a charming little porter's daughter, who falls violently in love with him, and for whom he conceives a sudden passion. Not the man to marry thus, he rises superior to trifling with a temptation, and shows resolution and, what he is never indicated as wanting, generous and honourable impulse. Subsequently he consents to marry his old flirting little friend, for whom he has no love (as he honestly tells her), because she brings him wealth and a seat in Parliament. He finds that so dishonourable a condition is annexed to the acceptance of these advantages that he is bound to refuse them; but in doing so he will not break the engagement of honour which binds him to Blanche Amory, although he has discovered that the true leaning of his heart is towards Laura, his mother's ward, who has loved him from old times. The faithlessness of his *fiancée* rescues him, and allows him to marry her whom he really prefers. He does so, and the spirit of his life remains that which was before indicated. He continues a kind-hearted, conceited, clever, self-centered, sceptical man of this world purely. The history concludes with a few sentences, in which the author briefly vindicates it as being a picture in conformity with the actual arrangements of divine providence; and invites us, "knowing how mean the best of us is," to "give a hand of charity to Arthur Pendennis, with all his faults and shortcomings, who does not claim to be a hero, but only a man and a brother." We must be allowed to observe in passing, that though we dare not refuse the hand of charity to Mr. Pendennis, it costs a struggle to give it; and that any thing further, such as affection or respect, we are quite unable to feel. We have no wish to be intimate with him. We find him intensely disagreeable, ill-bred, and ostentatiously offensive. But this is purely a personal matter, and may be referred partly to envy of his superior talents, partly to disgust at his inordinate self-conceit. What we have to do with is the moral view taken by the author. It is characteristic that, while professing to lay bare the weaknesses and shortcomings of Pendennis's worldly life, he does not once touch the root of the matter, or indicate the true want of this wasted spirit. To a mind like Arthur's, which measures the emptiness of all worldly subjects of ambition, it is more than to any other essential that it should have some gleam of insight and some practical interest in the higher diviner life which embraces this. And Arthur, orthodox, church-going Christian as he no doubt is, is a practical atheist. With a pure and awful reverence for the manifestations of holiness in others, gazing on a woman praying as with the reverted eyes of one justly banished from Paradise, and himself

not without pious impulses, he lives without God in the world. And if we were to lay our hand on the most deep-seated failing of Mr. Thackeray's works, we should find it, not in his sneers or in his contemptuous estimate of human nature, but in the low level on which the whole body of his creation stands, and in the narrow boundaries within which the whole is enclosed. We should have no quarrel with an artist who should paint the world as it is, ay, and in far truer colours than Mr. Thackeray dares to use; but then he must embrace the true scope of life, he must not ignore those higher connections from which alone it acquires a purpose, and reduce it to a medley fit only to move the laughter of fools and the tears and scorn of the wise. It is not enough to gaze on the varied conditions of man, and say, We accept them, they are manifestations of the divine will. One can almost imagine that the faith of an animal rises to this uninformed acceptance of the conditions of existence. To man it is granted to touch here and there the general clue of the divine purpose, and to hold ever by that thread which belongs to his individual soul; to him is given a modifying will, a power of choice, and an active energy; of him that highest of all things has been said, that he may be a fellow-worker with God. Even in the minutiae of his daily life he may follow that service which is perfect freedom, and only not be a servant because he has the higher tenderer invitation to be a child. Is it answered, that these themes are too serious for the novelist, the entertainer of lighter hours, the comic-tale writer? Then we say, that as long as a writer confines himself to fragmentary sketches of life, to its superficial humours or sentiments, the answer is good; and that we have no objection whatever to take the entertainment at its full worth, and laugh gaily with Grimaldi in the pantomime or Mathews in the farce. But Mr. Thackeray never cultivated this sort of literature in spirit, though he may for a time have availed himself of its ordinary forms. His genius is too large, too penetrating, too grave to move in this sphere. He professes to paint human life; and he who does so, and who does not base his conception on that religious substructure which alone makes it other than shreds of flying dreams, is an incomplete artist and a false moralist. And Mr. Thackeray cannot be sheltered behind the assertion that a fitting reverence precludes the intermingling of religious ideas with light literature,—first, because what we ask for does not demand a constant presence of the religious element on the surface, or indeed that it should appear there at all,—only that the spirit of the work and the picture of life should recognise it as at the foundation, or even only not utterly lose sight of it as a fundamental element in the conception of this world; and secondly, because he does not scruple (and fitly, we think) reverently to

introduce the topic of religion, and to picture a humble spirit looking upwards for consolation and support ;—because, while he includes the *sentiment*, he excludes the *realities* of religion, and has no place for those aspirations of the higher life, only to form the field for which, was this world he deals with created. And this further quarrel we have with Mr. Thackeray's picture—that he gives a worldly view of the world ; that through sarcasm and satire there shines every where a real undue appreciation of worldly things—most, of those things he is most bitter against—money and rank ; and above all, a debasing sensitiveness to the opinion of those around us, apart from any regard for them and independently of any respect for their judgment. He reads as if he had a consciousness in himself of too great an appreciation of these things, against which his moral indignation is always in arms, and to which his honesty compels him to give expression ; as if the bitterness of his jests were founded on that temper the poet speaks of—

“ Out of that mood was born
Self-scorn, and then laughter at that self-scorn.”

Otherwise, by what strange distortion can a man of Mr. Thackeray's mind and heart have allowed himself to become absorbed in the contemplation of meanness and false shame and the world's low worship of mere worldly advantages ? How can he have permitted so unpleasant a subject to grow on him till it has become the atmosphere of his thoughts ? As Swift rakes in dirt, so Thackeray in meanness. He loves to anatomise its every form, to waylay and detect it at every corner, to turn it inside out, to descant on it, to conjugate it. He sees English society worshipping a golden and titled calf, and he angrily dashes down the image ; but that is not enough ; he grinds it to powder, and mingles it in every draught he gives us. We know there are these things in the world ; but the question is, whether an author is well employed in constantly forcing them on our attention. All will agree that the less a man can be affected by them the better ; we know these meannesses and basenesses are in our own natures ; but the true way to deal with them is, looking upwards, to tread them under foot, not to go scraping about with our noses to the ground and taking credit for our humility and honesty when we lay them bare. They grow thick enough in our own soil and in our neighbours', if we choose to devote ourselves to the search. Any man will succeed in distorting and confusing his moral judgment, if he will but search long enough among his mixed motives to lay hold of the mean or selfish element, and do but give it attention enough when he has found it. Grant, if you will, that an element of self-interest mingles in all we do ;

are we likely to lose it by always looking for it? Is there any thing less edifying than Mr. Thackeray's way of showing up the meannesses and mixed motives of our neighbours, and then turning sharply on his readers, crying, "You're as bad, I'm as bad, we are none of us better than our neighbours; allow me to continue to excoriate them"? The remedy for these failings is not in exposing and railing at them. It is in raising men out of the atmosphere of them. The highest and the surest escape is the same we spoke of before, as transmuting life by a divine alchemy from barrenness, emptiness, and vanity into a harvest-field of rich opportunities and a battle-field for high ambition. Just in the degree in which a man's secret soul is occupied by a life at once within and outside this life will the small vexations of life and the pettinesses of others and even of himself fail to trouble him; the more he can absorb himself in a loftier pursuit, the more heedlessly will he brush through the nettles which Mr. Thackeray will have us sit down in to examine.

But apart from these considerations, any vivid interests powerful enough thoroughly to occupy a man suffice to set him free from this morbid and one-sided scrutiny of himself and his neighbours. But Mr. Thackeray not only narrows the field of life—he ignores the main avenues which, within the boundaries of the world he describes, are available as an escape both from an unhealthy sensitiveness to the meanness around us and within us, and from that burdening ever-presence of self under which almost all his characters labour.

Wide as is his knowledge of men, he seems to have little acquaintance with affairs. He paints men almost entirely in their moments of relaxation. He never describes a man carried out of himself by strong practical aims and interests. He is unwilling to recognise, seems scarcely to believe, that men ever have disinterested motives, or can be deeply occupied by other things than the demands of the feelings or the exigencies of gaining a livelihood. He laughs to scorn the idea that a man in writing, for instance, can have any higher object than to gain a money reward. He will have it that writing is a trade, and that all the writer can aspire to in the way of lofty aims is to write honestly, and without false exaggeration of sentiment or wilful distortion of fact. And on this latter point he speaks strongly and well, and with a vivid consciousness of some of an author's most immediate sources of temptation. It is true, perhaps, that the art of letters has become unduly subservient to money gains, that even men of genius are apt to consider too closely not what their own conception of what is best and highest prompts them to, but what will tell best in securing a popular acceptance; and that they too often wait timidly and obsequiously on the pub-

lic taste of the day. Yet this spirit is not so universal as Mr. Thackeray would have us think. Letters still leave a man free to be true to himself and his art, as well as to the ordinary exigencies of honesty. Even if they did not, there are plenty of other careers in which a man may forget himself in devotion to something beyond him. And in the case of the painter, indeed, Mr. Thackeray can see that while the artist labours for bread, his very choice of his profession as a means of making bread shows his love for it, and that as he who preaches the Gospel may justly live by it, the fact that he lives by his art is by no means inconsistent with a conscious devotion to its own high ends, or with his finding in a pure love for it the truest and most powerful source of his activity. There is a charming passage in the *Newcomes* which shows how fully Mr. Thackeray can enter when he chooses into the joys, the consolations, and the absorption of art :

"The painter turned as he spoke ; and the bright northern light which fell upon the sitter's head was intercepted, and lighted up his own as he addressed us. Out of that bright light looked his pale thoughtful face and long locks and eager brown eyes. The palette on his arm was a great shield painted of many colours : he carried his maul-stick and a sheaf of brushes along with it, the weapons of his glorious but harmless war. With these he achieves conquests, wherein none are wounded save the envious : with that he shelters him against how much idleness, ambition, temptation ! Occupied over that consoling work, idle thoughts cannot gain the mastery over him ; selfish wishes or desires are kept at bay. Art is truth ; and truth is religion ; and its study and practice a daily work of pious duty. What are the world's struggles, brawls, successes, to that calm recluse pursuing his calling ? See, twinkling in the darkness round his chamber, numberless beautiful trophies of the graceful victories which he has won,—sweet flowers of fancy reared by him,—kind shapes of beauty which he has devised and moulded. The world enters into the artist's studio, and scornfully bids him a price for his genius, or makes dull pretence to admire it. What know you of his art ? You cannot read the alphabet of that sacred book, good old Thomas Newcome !"

As a rule, however, the author of *Vanity Fair* never represents a man as taken out of himself, except in some instances by the passions or the affections which approach nearest to instincts. He produces his characters on the stage generally only in their hours of idleness or amusement ; and though he may indicate external occupation, he never (save, perhaps, in the sketch of J. J.) indicates an absorbing external interest. All his characters are self-engrossed, most of them self-seeking. Of Pendennis he tells us openly, "ours, as the reader has possibly already discovered, is a selfish story, and almost every person, according to his

nature more or less generous than George, and according to the way of the world, as it seems to us, is occupied about Number One." The occasion which calls out this expression of conviction indicates the source from which it springs. No man can set too high a value on the affections, but too exclusive a one he easily may; and this, as we have before indicated, is Mr. Thackeray's danger. He sees that the purest passion, the strongest personal friendship, and still more, the holy instinct of maternal love,—which he so admires and reverences that he seems to approach the subject on bended knee,—have mingled in their very essence a tincture of self; and finding it here, it seems easy to him to assume that no province of human life can possibly be free from it. Whereas, in fact, the affections are the strongholds of self-occupancy. Warm feelings, devoted instincts of attachment, are but a blessed gift from heaven, a part of the granted *nature*, and in their action simply the indulgence of a delightful emotion. Through the intellect and the will is a man's escape from self; thought and action are the conditions of self-forgetfulness; and love only loses its element of self in active service for the beloved object. Brooding over an attachment is the gratification of the highest pleasurable instinct granted to man; it is not conscious self-seeking, it is self-gratification; to labour for the sake of love is at once to escape from self, and the reverse of self-seeking. And as the highest virtues have the deepest temptations by their side, perhaps the most devout soul is the most in danger of a subtle spirit of self-occupancy, and most needs a field of active service; and on the other hand, the conditions of life offer the easiest escape from self-occupation in proportion as they lie farther from the domain of sentiment—science more than art, and active life more than science; and that pursuit offers the least temptation to selfishness which affords a man the widest and most absorbing sphere of exertion in the interest of others. Government is the employment which gives a man the least excuse for being self-occupied, though no doubt it may present him with formidable temptations to gratify what selfishness he has. In his want of interest in the active concerns of life, and in his emotional and artistic nature, are probably to be found the grounds of Mr. Thackeray's belief in the universality of self-occupation, which by a want of intellectual discrimination he confounds with self-seeking or selfishness.

Some of Mr. Thackeray's lesser works are infused throughout with a genial kindly spirit; such are the *History of Mr. Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond* (which it is pleasant to hear is a favourite with the author), and the *Kickleburys on the Rhine*, *Dr. Birch's School*, &c. In these, foibles are pleasantly touched with cheerful happy raillery, and a light, gay,

yet searching tone of ridicule, and a tender pleasing pathos, pervade the story: "the air nimbly and sweetly recommends itself;" the wit plays freshly and brightly, like the sun glittering through the green leaves on the wood-paths. But in the mass of his works the tendencies we have before spoken of give a dark and unpleasing ground to the whole picture; and on it he draws in strong black and white. His general view of English society is a very low and unrelieved one. It is a true but a strictly one-sided representation, selected partly for its amusing elements, partly from an unhappy idiosyncrasy of the author. An opposite picture might be drawn as flattering as this is satirical; and neither, of course, would be complete. On this stage move many figures fair and dark. The author's skill by no means forsakes him when he chooses to draw upon our love and admiration: Dobbin and Amelia, Warrington and Laura, and Helen; Lady Esmond, Colonel Newcome, and the sweet, placid, tear-worn, but somewhat shadowy image of Madame de Florac, rise up at once before the mind. But he puts such characters apart; they shine like glowworms, brightly, but with no influence in the surrounding darkness. They are in his world, but scarcely of it; they are never allowed to leaven his general conception of society. A lump of sugar here and there cannot soften the bitterness of the whole cake. It would be unjust, perhaps, to say that his genius is more at home in his darker portraitures; but they certainly gain an undue significance, if only from this, that they are always represented in their proper sphere of activity, where their whole cleverness and energy is brought into light, whereas his fairer characters are invariably those whose excellence consists in the goodness of their instincts and emotions, and, with the single exception of Colonel Esmond, no external field of any interest is found for them to occupy. It is unfortunate, too, that Mr. Thackeray finds the main sources of wit and amusement in the most close connection with some form of vice or wickedness. How often is his laughter spun out of baseness, and crime, and misery! Degrading selfishness, heathen worldliness, abandoned honour, broken oaths, dice, drunkenness, every form of viciousness but one are made the subjects of sparkling satire, witty jests, the universal charity of mockery, and scorn tempered by scepticism. The company of bad men and women in the world is not elevating. How can they be elevating made amusing in books? The "terrible death-chant of the contrite chimney-sweep," in which Sam Hall conveys the lesson of his example, enforced by maledictions, has a grim humour about it true enough,—might almost be said to be a work of genius; but we don't take our daughters to hear it sung. Wickedness has its funny side; but it grates on our ears to hear English ladies talking as they do

sometimes of "that charming wicked little Becky." We don't say that a vicious or even a degraded nature is not a fit subject for the artist,—no doubt it is; we do not say it is an unfit subject even for comedy; but we do say it ought not to be comically treated. We do maintain that there is a sin against good taste and right moral influence in mingling too intimately real vice and the ridiculous; they may be alternated, but not mixed, still less almost chemically combined, after Mr. Thackeray's fashion. You sap the force of moral resentment when, by smiling raillery or farcical laughter, you make tolerable the stern realities of sin. We know no book with so repulsive a contrast between the broad farce, almost buffoonery, of its form, and the hideous and utterly unrelieved baseness and wickedness of its subject-matter, as is exhibited in the history of "Mr. Deuceace," told in the characteristic orthography of "Jeames." Mr. Thackeray has in his heart an eager hatred of baseness and hypocrisy. It bursts out unmistakably sometimes. It is hidden, no doubt, under all his air of persiflage; but it is part of his art to preserve a mask of neutrality; and an occasional protest has no weight against the tone of universal toleration, and the bantering mood which shakes these glittering sparks of wit out of the devil's devices. Sin is fire; and Mr. Thackeray makes fireworks of it.

And not only the witty emblazonment is bad, the elaborate detail is bad; and this applies not alone to the descriptions of the more serious vices, but to the lesser meannesses which we have before mentioned as occupying so undue a space of Mr. Thackeray's attention. It can be good for none of us to mingle so pleasantly and so closely with old Sir Pitt Crawley, with Becky, with old Osborne, with Major Pendennis, or even his nephew, with Costigan, with Altamont, with Blanche, with Lord Steyne, with many of those snobs. It is bad for us to be constantly rubbed against vice or sin of any kind; and we do not know whether the constant minutiae of selfishness, of weakness, of false ambition, of cringing meanness and vulgarity, are not more harmful than the details of murder and other violent crime. Ainsworth and Thackeray differ in this respect only in the greater refinement and reconditeness of the latter. Why do we condemn the French school of novels? Because of the danger and debasement which lie in familiarising the ideas they contain. If we rightly think Richardson's *Pamela* unfit reading on account of its prurient minute details of a seduction, may we not protest against some portions of Mr. Thackeray's works which bring us so unintermittingly in contact with other degrading weaknesses of our nature, accompanied by something of a similar zest in the author, which has great power to infect the reader? On Richardson's subject, we should not, in the present day,

tolerate such minuteness for an instant; on that matter we have an almost absurd apprehension of the dangers of infection. We not only avoid details, we shun the subject altogether: an author who means to be read must not come within a mile of it,—he must cripple his creations of character and his pictures of life in order to avoid it. Mr. Thackeray is fully aware of this; mere commercial self-preservation makes it necessary to hold aloof. But if the instinct which avoids familiarity with one particular form of vice and sinfulness be true, as we believe it to be, though overstrained, ought not the same instinct to apply in due proportion to other forms of vice and sinfulness?

It is no vindication of the dark tints of Mr. Thackeray's painting to say that base natures and low motives throng life itself, that it is not a Jenny and Jessamy world, and that we must all mix in it. The fact is, that a vast number of Mr. Thackeray's readers learn more of the soiled aspects of the world from his pages than from any experience of their own. And if it be said that these considerations would go too far in curtailing the range of art, we reply, that the author limits its range by the same considerations, but so as to incur a double evil; for while he cuts himself off from almost a whole side of human life in order to accommodate himself to modern taste and female readers, he certainly retains much which any but the world's standard of taste would willingly see excluded. Conventionally he is thoroughly unexceptionable. Practically his writings are too cramped for the indurated apprehensions of men who know the world; too tarnished for those who are unsophisticated, whether men, women, or children. A broad and lifelike picture of wickedness, even baseness, is not objected to. Iago and Blifil leave no stain on the mind; but incessant pottering over small meannesses bears the same relation to Shakespeare's and Fielding's treatment of this subject as, in another subject, Paul de Kock's novels do to *Tom Jones*. The most condensed illustration of this morbid tendency is republished from the *Comic Almanac* in the first volume of Mr. Thackeray's *Miscellanies*,—the "Fatal Boots." It is the cleverest piece of irony since *Jonathan Wild*, and perhaps the most subtle and complete delineation of an utterly base and selfish nature ever written. It is more painful and humiliating reading than *Jonathan Wild*; because the greater crimes of the latter remove him further from us, and because he is distinguished by some power of intellect and force of character utterly denied to the abject Stubbs, whose autobiography reads like the smell of bad cabbages.

It is the evil of all satire, that it depends for its force upon a minute and vivid delineation of faults and vices which it never is advantageous to drag into light. Its only useful sphere is

personality. It is not often that personal satire is defensible; but in that, or the near approaches to it, is the only practical and possibly advantageous exercise of the art. You can make one man feel the lash, and direct a storm of indignation against him which may punish him or terrify him into a new course. And so it is possible to attack effectively a small class, or an opinion or course of action, which admits of practical change or abandonment. You may satirise General Simpson or the *Times*, and possibly produce an effect, though it is not probable; you may satirise the Palace Court, the peace-party, or the conduct of the war, and it may be with a result: but you cannot scourge abstract vices; you cannot hope to be practically employed when you satirise hypocrisy, or mammon-worship, or false adulation of rank, or the worldly estimate of temporal advantages which results in wretched marriages or selfish singleness. For one who learns from Mr. Thackeray to amend a folly of his own, how many will gain a sharper insight into those of their friends! And to none of our tendencies does Mr. Thackeray minister so effectively as to this. His social satire is fair and honest, "strikes no foul blow," as he himself says of it; but it is so searching, so minute, deals with such real incident of every-day occurrence, that it forms a sort of public gossip. It is a treasury of general observation, out of which to make particular applications. It gives us an insight we never had before into the weaknesses of our neighbours, makes us rich in new sources of contempt, and indicates clearly the channels of false shame. We can test our friends' daily life by it, and cry, "Isn't that like Mrs. Kewsey?" and "The very way the Portmans go on."

As a set-off against these unpleasing elements in Mr. Thackeray's writings, there is one whole side of his genius which casts a pure and pleasant sunshine over his pages. He has a heart as deep and kind as ever wrote itself in fiction. His feelings are warm and impetuous, his nature honest, truthful, honourable. Against cruelty, against baseness, against treachery, his indignation flames out quick and sudden, like a scorching fire. With what is manly, frank, and noble, he has a native inborn sympathy. If his sense of the ludicrous, and his wit, are too often nourished upon wickedness and depravity, he is familiar with another and truer connection, and has an exquisite felicity and moving power in the mingling of humour and pathos. If his works as a whole want purpose and depth, and clearness of moral conviction, if they accept sin simply as part of what is, instead of as a departure from what should be, yet they preach throughout lessons of example more telling than precept, and enclose many and many a passage well fitted to stir the spirit and to move the heart. If his wicked and mean creations are too pre-

dominant and too detailed, he has some at least whose great goodness and white purity relieve by fair gleams the dark and clouded landscape. They are emotional characters: but are not these the very ones which practically take the strongest hold on our affections; and the errors of impulse those which, however long the preacher may preach, we shall always the most readily excuse? Who ever painted a manly generous boy with so free and loving a pencil as the author of *Dr. Birch's School*, of Champion Major, and of young Clive Newcome? Who else has that fine touch that can picture us so delicately and so clearly the fresh innocence of girlhood, the tender passion of a loving woman, or the absorbing devotion of a mother? Who can trace in firmer strokes fidelity and courage and temperate endurance in a man? In every page, alternating with bitterness, and sometimes an unsparing cruelty of sarcasm, there shines out a kindly affectionate nature, soft compassion, and humble reverence. It is as if his nature, like his writings, were full of strongly-contrasted elements, lying closely side by side. Whatever his defects,—and they are great,—he must always take his stand as one of the masters of English fiction; inferior to Fielding, because he wants his breadth and range, the freeness of his air, and the soundness of his moral healthfulness; but his rival in accuracy of insight and vigour of imagination; and perhaps, as we have before said, more than his rival in fertility. And since Fielding's time, though characters have been drawn more complete than any one of Mr. Thackeray's, no fiction has been written in the school to which his imagination belongs which can bear a moment's comparison with *Vanity Fair*. This is hitherto his masterpiece, and will probably always remain so. There is a *vis* in it greater than in any of his other works—the lines are more sharply, deeply cut, the whole more marked with the signs of special and peculiar genius. Our pleasure in it alternates vividly with dislike—almost repulsion; but our admiration is compelled by all parts of it, and our eagerest sympathy by some. Dobbin and Amelia will always remain living inmates of the English mind. They have both of them, Amelia especially, had much injustice done them by their author; but as their images lie longer in our breasts, and we meditate upon them, the sneers and inuendoes fade away, and we see them undefaced, and recognise that Dobbin's devotion was not selfishness, and Amelia's characteristic tenderness not weakness. Just as with living people small obscurations and accidents fall away, and we estimate the whole character better in absence, so it is with these: we know them better, and love them more trustfully in memory than on the actual page. Thackeray's genius is in many respects not unlike that of Goethe; and such

another woman as Amelia has not been drawn since Margaret in *Faust*.

Of his other great works, *Pendennis* is the richest in character and incident, and the least pleasing; the *Newcomes* the most humane, but less vigorous and concentrated than any of the others; *Esmond*—the later parts at least—by far the best and noblest. We have no temptation to discuss the merits of its imitative style and scenery, observing only that though a modern mind shines through the external coat, yet probably no other man could have gathered so many minute and characteristic indicia of the times of which he writes, and so artfully have blended them together. It is as a tale we look at it; and though to most men such a subject, so treated, would have afforded more than ordinary temptations to an overloading of character with costume and external detail, with Mr. Thackeray the reverse is the case. He is freed from his devotion to the petty satire of modern conventions, and has fewer calls for the exercise of small contempts. The main characters, Esmond, his mistress, and Beatrix, are the ablest he has drawn; they are not less vivid than his others, and more complete. Esmond is strong, vigorous, noble, finely executed as well as conceived, and his weakness springs from the strength of a generous and impulsive nature. He is no exception to the observation that Mr. Thackeray never endows a hero with principles of action. Esmond is true to persons, not to ideas of right or duty. His virtue is fidelity, not conscientiousness. Beatrix is perhaps the finest picture of splendid, lustrous, physical beauty ever given to the world. It shines down every woman that poet or painter ever drew. Helen of Greece,

“Fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars,”

is the only one who approaches her. And both her character and that of her mother are master-pieces of poetical insight; the latter blemished, however, here and there with the author's unconquerable hankering to lay his finger on a blot. He must search it out, and give it at least its due blackness. He will not leave you to gather that it must be there,—he parades it to the day, and presses it to your reluctant eyes. It comes partly from the truthfulness of his nature, which cannot bear that a weakness should be concealed, and partly probably from a mistaken apprehension of the truth that the artist must be true to nature. There was a time when a good deal of parade was made and some very diluted philosophy spun out of the distinction between “the true” and “the real.” But this simple fact there is, that a man may be true to nature and yet depart from all her mani-

fested forms; and that it is a higher striving to be faithful to such an inborn conception than to mutilate and distort it for the sake of finding room in it for certain observed facts. Mr. Thackeray sometimes does this, oftener he does what is quite as unpleasing. When in a character, especially a woman's, he comes upon a defect, he does not allow it to speak itself, or show itself naturally, and sink with its own proper significance into the reader's mind. He rushes in as author, seizes on it, and holds it up with sadness or triumph: "See," he says, "this is what you find in the best women." Thus he gives it an undue importance and vividness, and troubles and distorts the true impression of the whole character.

In the same spirit he lays hold of the petty dishonesties and shams of social life. Almost all these have their origin in vanity, and in its hasty and habitual gratification the meanness of the devices is overlooked, at any rate not often wilfully adopted with a consciousness of its presence. Such contrivances are follies of a bad kind; but to stigmatise them as deliberate hypocrisies is to give a very false significance to the worst ingredient in them.

In the *Newcomes* "the elements are kindlier mixed" than in any of the other fictions; there is a great softening of tone, a larger predominance is given to feeling over sarcasm. As before, the book is a transcript from life; but the life is more pleasantly selected, and the baser ingredients not scattered with so lavish a hand. If the execution be somewhat inferior, as perhaps it is, the characters of Clive and Ethel less clearly and vividly defined than we have by long use to high excellence begun to think we have a right to expect they should be, and the former unattractive in his feebleness, if the journey through the story be rather *langweilig*, sometimes from over-detail, sometimes from long and superficial moralisings over the sins of society,—yet there is much to reconcile us to these shortcomings in exchange, in some greater respite from the accustomed sneer. We have said before that the genius of Thackeray has many analogies to that of Goethe. He is like him, not only in his mode of depicting characters as they live, instead of reproducing their depths and entirety from the conception of a penetrative imagination, but also in his patient and tolerant acceptance of all existing phenomena, and his shrinking not merely from moral judgment but from moral estimate. The avoidance of the former, springs in Thackeray from kindly feeling, from the just and humble sense we all should have that our own demerits make it unseemly for us to ascend the judgment-chair, and from a wide appreciation of the variety and obscurity of men's real motives of action; the latter, a very different thing, springs from this same wide insight,

which makes the task more than ordinarily difficult, especially to an intellect not framed to take pleasure in general conclusions, and from his imagination being one which does not naturally conceive in separate wholes, and most of all from an insufficient sense of the duty incumbent on us all to form determinate estimates of the characters and moral incidents around us, if only to form the landmarks and bearings for our own conduct in life. These features remain in the *Newcomes*. There is the same want of ballasting thought, the same see-saw between cynicism and sentiment, the same suspension of moral judgment. The indignant impulse prompts the lash, and the hand at once delivers it; while the mind hangs back, doubts its justice, and sums up after execution with an appeal to our charity on the score of the undecipherable motives of human action, the heart's universal power of self-deception, and the urgency of fate and circumstance.

ART. VIII.—FOREIGN POLICY AND THE NEXT CAMPAIGN.

General Treaty of Congress, signed at Vienna, June 9, 1815; with the three Annexes thereto, relating to the Kingdom of Poland and the Republic of Cracow. Presented to the House of Commons by her Majesty's command, in pursuance of their Address of the 8th February 1847.

Correspondence between Viscount Castlereagh (late Marquis of Londonderry) and the Emperor Alexander of Russia, respecting the Kingdom of Poland. Vienna, October, November, 1814. Presented to the House of Commons, February 1847.

Papers relative to the Suppression, by the Governments of Austria, Prussia, and Russia, of the free State of Cracow, and to the Annexation of that State to the Austrian Empire. Presented to both Houses of Parliament, February 1847.

Correspondence respecting the Relations between Greece and Turkey. Presented to both Houses of Parliament, 1854.

Eastern Papers. Part XIV. *Negotiation at Vienna.* Presented to both Houses of Parliament, 1855.

Geschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts seit den Wiener Verträgen. Von G. G. Gervinus. Erster Band. Leipzig, 1855.

The Polish Question, from the German Point of View. By a German Statesman. Translated from the German. London, Ridgway. 1855.

THE "happy new year" prayed for to-day by millions of affectionate voices,—may God copiously send it into private homes, where so much remains sheltered from the world's storms! In

public affairs it is more than can be expected ; and to exchange such a wish in the family of States would imply a levity and delusion secure of disappointment. At the opening of 1856 Europe knows that the holiday-mood must be short, and the welcome to the fresh time graver than its wont. Stern duties await it ; sharp sufferings impend over the months ; unforeseen complications cannot fail to arise ; and never was there a time when clear commanding purpose was more needful in our statesmen,—purpose flexible enough to take up the exigencies of the hour, but unbending in its general direction. Dearth of the chief necessities of life, a falling scale of wages, a rising rate of discount, the European spread of speculative finance, the need of loans by every body at once, growls from Washington, insolence from Naples, snares from Vienna, plots at Athens, the permanent ban of the Pope on one ally, and the periodic shots of assassins at another,—are omens serious enough to make wise men anxious, and to fill the irresolute with dismay. None of these things move us, however, in comparison with one all-pervading doubt, which adds a darkness to them all : have we public men to lead us with honour through ?—men who see their way, and mean to hold to it ; who, having shaped the nation's best instincts into well-defined conviction, will prevent popular fickleness by constancy in themselves ; men in whose hands the character of England and the menaced interests of Europe are really safe ? This miserable doubt has settled with a fixed depression on the spirit of the country. Banished for a moment by happy words at Romsey, it is brought back by sinister overtures to Knowsley ; forgotten in the excitement of the morning's telegraph, it returns at night with some "four-point" rumour from Vienna or Berlin. Nor does this painful feeling merely express a personal estimate of this or that cabinet-minister or political leader ; though it would find perhaps excuse enough in the shifting parts of last year's drama at St. Stephen's. The distrust is chronic, and has a deeper seat. It is impossible to follow men who cease to lead, and put faith in those who have no faith themselves ; and it has become the habit and accomplishment of public men to substitute the feeling of the country for their own ; to dispense with positive convictions, and calculate instead the pressures of the hour ; to determine the right by merely assuming the inevitable. It was the fatal merit of Sir Robert Peel to leave this type of political morality as a heritage to his successors. Thrice compelled to surrender to the force of national opinion, and frankly accepting it as a decree of nature, he acquired a matchless tact in yielding ; he consecrated the virtue of legislative acquiescence ; he identified statesmanship with the art of discriminating between ripe and unripe social wants. The

admiration felt for his later career has raised this narrow and imperfect conception into the Englishman's very ideal of political wisdom; giving it a prominence far greater, it is probable, than it had in his own mind. No doubt it is of the utmost moment to read aright the indications of matured opinion, to avoid protracted resistance to an irreversible national will, and pronounce the verdict when the hearing has fairly closed. The institutions of a country are thus kept in permanent harmony with its life, and escape the danger incurred either by their own inertia or by the pedantry of *doctrinaire* politicians. Yet, after all, this is but the negative side of government. We cannot consent to reduce it thus to a mere registering-machine for jotting down the wishes of the hour, and forming the diary of a people's humours. Let the popular sentiment act freely on the statesman; but if he does not powerfully react on the popular sentiment, and mould the very opinion which he obeys, he is unworthy to occupy his higher point of view:

"Celsâ sedet Æolus arce

Sceptra tenens, mollitque animos, et temperat iras."

But, according to our modern doctrine, the political Æolus is but paid clerk to the national anemometer; his cave of the winds, a snug office in Downing Street; and his business, to supply paper for the wriggling lines of the outside breeze, and keep the pencils pointed that are broken by jerks of storm. The opinions prevalent in a free country are surely not to be treated as a *destiny*, on which the minister has but to wait; they are, to an extent little suspected, an undetermined power that waits for him. True, a host of other causes is ever impressing a certain direction on the mind of a people; but among them all there is no influence more steadily intense than the earnest expression, by trusted leaders, of a clear political creed and noble public aims. To abdicate this function, to leave it in the state to which the last five-and-twenty years have reduced it, amounts to a confession of unfaithfulness or incapacity. A few weeks ago a candidate for the suffrages of an Irish constituency, in responding to public curiosity as to his political principles, replied, "Just what you please, gentlemen."* Perhaps he intended to parody the pliant policy which he emulated only too well.

If in relation to *home* questions there is some plea for the helpless sequaciousness of our statesmen, they cannot be excused

* "You will naturally feel anxious to know what particular line of politics I shall advocate, in the event of your choosing me for your representative. My answer is plain,—*Whatever you please*. Although a Catholic in religion, yet I am not bound by the Church; and you have only to direct me how I will [*sic*] act, and I shall endeavour to advocate your interests."—*Address of Mr. C. Fitzgerald Higgins to the Constituency of Armagh.*

from the duty of directly forming and frankly leading the public sentiment on *foreign* affairs. Here, for the most part, they have it all their own way. Their councils are unembarrassed by any predetermination in the national will; and if their hands are weak, it is not from excess, but from defect in the "pressure from without." It is Lord Palmerston's own remark, that "one of the chief difficulties in foreign affairs which are felt in this country is due to the circumstance of the great bulk of the people having cared, generally, little about them." And if it be so, *who* is to blame? Are the English people, by some fatality of nature, incurious of the world's affairs? or doomed, by insular position, to a blind selfishness? or so pleasantly asleep on their own liberties, that no cries of wrong or alarm of advancing tyrannies can wake them? Such reproaches may be pardoned when flung at us from Kossuth's embittered and scornful spirit; but an English minister should know that opportunity has never been given us in vain to acknowledge our international obligations and venture something for truth and justice in other lands. Queen Elizabeth had no occasion to complain that her people knew nothing of the Netherlands, and were without opinions about Spain. Cromwell found in a vigorous policy abroad his best support amid dangers at home. Islands and stations in every sea,—not won by colonisation only, but the award of treaty or the prize of war—Gibraltar, Jamaica, Malta,—attest the habitual participation of this country in all great European movements. How, indeed, is it possible that a people with possessions in every habitable latitude of both hemispheres, with kindred and commerce in every civilised land, with the exiles of every continental convulsion living on their shores,—should be indifferent to "foreign affairs?" We feel precisely as much interest about them as our rulers choose to invite;—intense in crises of conflict like the present, when sacrifices are needed and publicity is inevitable; relaxing in peaceful times, when controversies are removed from the battle-ground to the diplomatic desk, and the guardians of the "public service," freed from immediate dependence on the national spirit, relapse into mystery and silence. A sustained interest in foreign affairs requires a sustained knowledge: and this it has never been the habit or inclination of statesmen to keep up in parliament or the country. The fitful temper of the public mind has faithfully responded to their alternations of confidence and reserve; and as soon as they feel it their duty to hold us wide-awake to the course of external politics as it proceeds, instead of coming down upon us three or four times in a century for a sudden verdict on all the arrears, we are convinced that the last "difficulty" to be felt will be that of general apathy. As it is, our English habit of

government indemnifies itself for yieldingness in home affairs by uncommunicative independence in foreign policy. Imperial confidences, secret correspondence, Olmütz meetings, take place; the most important reports stream in from our ambassadors or consuls-general, mutual engagements distinctly affecting the future of Europe are covertly taken by foreign states;—and unless some stray whisper reaches the sensitive ear of stock-brokers and “own correspondents,” the facts first come to light a year or two after they have passed from diplomacy into history. We are far from attributing this to any official selfishness or treachery; far from wishing to see a parliamentary usurpation of the executive. We have less fear of un-English compromise, and of failure in political vigilance from the statesmen of any party, than from the middle-class multitude of the House of Commons; and believe that no instrument of government is so good as a reasonable *trust* reposed by parliament in the advisers it has given to the crown. But this trust, to be reasonable and free from caprice, must be *intelligent*. The management of international relations must cease to be an occult art. The minister must actively contribute from the materials in his custody to the formation of a sound public opinion, and the maintenance of a lively national interest in foreign affairs. Let his rule be to tell all that he fairly may, instead of only what he absolutely must. Let him rely for support, not on his ability to outwit bewildered country-gentlemen, and alight upon his feet however rudely tossed in the Yorkshire blanket of a peace-debate, but on the clear judgment of a country prepared and instructed by himself, and the open-eyed assent of a parliament not wholly left to the “light of nature” for its notions of the boundaries, races, religions, the recent history, alliances, and treaties, of all states beyond a vacation-trip. Had it been an established usage for the Secretary of Foreign Affairs to take leave of every session of parliament with a survey of external relations, we believe that, at the outbreak of the present war, the government would have seen its own way more clearly, have had a better understanding with the country, and been spared the distrusts and desertions which have so much paralysed its action.

The second year of the war is over; and with it ought to pass away the mere tentative conduct of it, which is permissible, even inevitable, in its first stage. The time has come when it must cease to be a mere military struggle, and must be taken possession of and directed by a comprehensive *policy*. And that policy ought to be a *new one*, computed, not on the necessities of 1815, but on the living conditions of our own generation, and the manifest requirements of the opening time. It is vain to urge that the *status quo ante*, or the four points, because once

accepted as sufficient *preventives* of war, ought to content us as its *issue*. Such pedantic ethics not only disregard the lessons of historical experience, but would secure to us all the curses of conflict without a hope or a compensation. The dissension of states is, in its very essence, their transition from one state of equilibrium to another; it attests the worn-out condition of the old adjustment; it is the tempestuous prayer of nations for a better;—and to advise relapse into the proved instability, and bar the search after any truer centre of repose, is to insure disturbance in perpetuity; it is to open the furrows of the present only to fling in dragons' teeth for the future. What is the use of the last forty years' experience, if it has not proved to us that the Treaty of Vienna secures no balance, but a monstrous overweight to the rudest, least scrupulous, steadiest, and most grasping power in Europe? What lesson have we learned from the chancery of St. Petersburg, if we still trust to its Cretan veracity, and look only to a revision of its moral guarantees? What are we the better for the 6000 guns and captured stores of Sebastopol, if we yet imagine that the Mediterranean is safe, and that no Byzantine empire can retrace its steps to Rome? Unless France and England are weak enough to believe "in the paramount destinies of Russia," it is their duty to address themselves to the whole problem of her overweening power, and direct the war towards its preconceived solution. This involves no abandonment of the original definite objects of the contest, no attempt at a universal re-settlement of Europe; but only a final clearance of illusions, a firmer grasp of the real conditions, and a resolute seizure of the most efficient resources.

It may be admitted that Lord Aberdeen was unjustly blamed for seeking in the first instance the alliance of Prussia and Austria. In resisting an aggression on the public law of Europe, all the great Powers have the same ostensible interest; and the partners to its establishment are the natural partners for its defence. There cannot be a doubt about the general rule, that a contumacious member of the family of states should be brought to reason by the joint action of all the rest. And however reasonable the suspicion may be, that the appeal for co-operation will, in certain instances, be made in vain, the duty remains of at least presenting the opportunity, and throwing the responsibility of refusal on the evasive states. It would have been an unpardonable error to force Vienna into union with St. Petersburg by presuming her unwillingness to take a better course, and overlooking her intense interest in the preservation of the general peace. Nor is it justifiable to break away at once from the existing bases and combinations on which the European equipoise has depended, till by every fair experiment their inadequacy has been proved.

It was necessary to try whether the engagements and habits of common understanding, established at the commencement of the peace, would still avail for its protection against new dangers. The time and forbearance spent in working out the answer have not been lost. The demonstration is complete. No one henceforth will expect from Austria any thing but the most direct self-preservation; she believes in Mr. Cobden's creed, and simply minds her own business,—reduces her military establishments, and lets the world's right and wrong find their "natural level," without bias from her to their "free competition." In the political exigencies of the new time, in the problem now opening on half the globe, the German governments disclaim all interest. They have no objection to have it settled for them; but the particular turn of the solution is a matter of indifference. To them it would be equally agreeable to see the Czar abated to a style of less oppressive patronage, or France pale and harmless from loss of blood, and England's civil freedom overmatched by the model despotism of the world. We know, then, precisely what the chance of their alliance is worth. Against a *common* danger to the system of which they are parts, it is nothing at all; and, to render it available, the scene must be laid nearer home. The first effect of their neutrality was to keep the war at a distance; the second should be to bring it to their frontier-posts.

In fact, the political combinations of 1815 were established with one view; those which we now want must take their form from another. *Then* it was the France of the Revolution, of the Consulate, of the Empire, against which precautions or penalties were taken; *now* it is the Russia of 1853 from whose encroachments protection is sought. It would be strange if the barrier thrown up to face the West were equally efficient to shield us on the East. The alliances natural then among fellow-sufferers in the general danger and comrades in the same field, have become in many ways unnatural now, under the changes of the interval and the exigencies of the hour. Besides the one great difference that France and Russia have changed places, and the protector of 1812 appears as the aggressor of 1853, the events of 1848 have altered the affinities of Europe, and awakened in the Western nations sympathies and antipathies which statesmen cannot permanently neglect. The fact cannot be disputed, that, beyond the ranks of professional politicians, Englishmen of all parties look with aversion on every form of Austrian alliance, and feel it an infinite relief to be delivered from the chance of so questionable a partnership. So strong and general is this shrinking, that we are convinced the spirit of the country would not long support any enterprise into which the double-eagle imported its black omen. Geographical position and political antecedents, however,

imposed the necessity of overtures now happily declined. Austria, on her eastern outposts, has the option of a plain duty or a public crime; she must either accept the office of guarding Europe against Muscovite encroachment, or become accomplice in the guilt. She has chosen the latter course, and is entitled to no further consideration. We are not insensible to the strength of her temptation and the manifold difficulties of her position. But if they mitigate the sentence on her unfaithfulness, it is only by enhancing the sense of her incapacity. She cannot do the duty of a frontier state. She is next neighbour to the world's great danger; and can only wheedle and coax it to keep still. She wants her army for her subjects, and has only intrigues and professions for her rivals and allies. Living in the memory of mankind chiefly by the reformation she has quenched and the kingdoms she has ruined, and representing to the imagination of to-day little else than a sleeping mass of bigotry, bankruptcy, and insurrection, she can bring us only the infection of distrust and hopelessness; and, of all the larger states, has the most certainly precarious and diminishing stake in that future of Europe for which we are called to provide.

We have, then, done, and overdone, our duty to the old Castlereagh combination, and are fairly free of Hapsburg trammels. In looking out for new alliances, it is to be hoped that regard will be had to the natural genius of our people and the manifest calling of the western and northern nations. It is in vain that statesmen of the old school deprecate a "war of principles;" and, relying on material interests and moral indifference, group the most heterogeneous states together in the same political bond. In such arrangements, as there is nothing spontaneous, there is nothing self-sustaining, nothing durable. They differ from a true adjustment as a railway-board from a family; the one united for an outward business, the other in the inner life. The sense of a common peril, or the indignation at a common wrong, may, no doubt, band together for a time the most incongruous elements;—it only needs that they be human. Of this kind is our connection with the Turks; founded on the accident of their station at the *propylæum* of the civilised world, and morally confirmed by just anger at the treatment they have received, it is nevertheless unsupported by the slightest social affinity, and could exist only in the presence of a threatening alternative. In the higher antipathies that inspire our resistance to Muscovite advance Constantinople has no share. We avail ourselves of its people's instinct of self-preservation for ends that look far beyond their probable term of existence in Europe. Of this kind, we trust, is *not* our connection with Sardinia. Recommended, no doubt, by a joint interest in the freedom of the Mediterranean,

it has a far deeper significance; and by expressing a sympathy of social development in addition to mere partnership of external defence, awakens a sentiment of pride and promise out of all proportion to its material weight. Such states it is that can best help each other,—most efficiently, most cheaply for themselves, most nobly for the world. These invisible and ideal ties, twined into the very heart of nations with living fibres of mutual respect and common admirations, are worth whole fleets and armies,—nay, will create whole fleets and armies, which no joint-stock political company could raise. A country indeed that has come to disclaim all preference and passion, that represents nothing but itself, that acknowledges no trust, that hangs neutral amid the sweep of contending enthusiasms, and only stops its ears until the storm be past, is but a withered member on the organism of humanity, whether lingering to dwindle or hastening to be struck off. The instinctive consciousness of some special function to perform,—a function identified with its very essence,—is to a people as the pulse of life, and may be found in instances most remote from our own approval. Even the rudeness of Russia feels the stirring of an *idea*. She is the champion of the Greek Church against the heterodox and infidel. The Austrian house inherited the dream of the “Holy Roman Empire,”—to defend western Christendom against the Saracens. Spain took her vow to Catholicism against the Protestants; the Low Countries and Sweden to Protestantism against the Catholics. With powers moved by such inner springs, we believe that scarcely any advantage of material resource will enable a people without faith, or governments blind to its force, permanently to contend. We admit the difficulty of applying this general doctrine to the particular conjuncture at which we stand. We feel the want of any definite rallying-cry like that which united and divided states in the days of Gustavus Adolphus. We know not how to shape into expression the latent faith and feeling which give a distinctive character to the temper of our own country or of any other. It is an age of indeterminate and composite tendencies, of aspirations suppressed and disguised. But this only complicates the problem, without removing it, or rendering its solution of less momentous consequence. The elective affinities of human societies, even where they defy statement and analysis, remain; and with or without our recognition will actually determine the future. Nor are we, after all, so much at a loss for a “cause” as we are apt to imagine; so much more indefinitely placed than the forerunners—in the sixteenth century, for instance—whose course now seems quite sharply marked out and easy to see, though severe to follow. There was no “side” for the Reformers to take until they shaped and formed it for

themselves,—no “Protestantism” for Saxony and Zürich to support till Luther and Zwingli created it. That age, too, like the present, had its dim and doubtful dawning of new consciousness; alive with groping sympathies, drawn to this, repelled from that, ere yet any outline of traceable conviction defined the sunrise and proclaimed the day. It is precisely by fidelity to incipient intimations of higher truth and good, by tampering with no moral disgust, by opening the heart freely to young nobleness and keeping up no visiting acquaintance with hoary lies, that little by little a faith grows up, a principle is disengaged to view, and the standard is raised which assembles the army of the future. Of what elements in Europe that army would be naturally composed may be surmised by help of certain signs and instincts of the time.

Over the greater part of the European continent two very marked phenomena must strike every observer who can compare the opposite extremities of five-and-twenty years; viz. the dependence of social order on *great armies*, and the increasing power of *organised priesthoods*. High military doctrine and high church doctrine are in the ascendant from Königsberg to Messina, from Normandy to Kherson. Could we enumerate all the cities and provinces which, at different times within the last ten years, have been declared under “state of siege,” the list would be an astonishing one, and would run, we believe, through every country except the Netherlands and Sweden. Yet there has been no foreign war, with the exception of the short affair that closed with the battle of Novara; the outlay for ordnance-stores has been every where for home consumption. Even Louis Philippe,—the commercial traveller of kings,—went into the *fortification-line*, and thought it a prudent *investment*. The Austrian rule lives virtually *encamped* on a great portion of its territory, and administers from head-quarters. Italy is a series of garrisons. The King of Prussia decorates his officers and flatters his priests, and calls honest members of parliament (among them Vincke himself) “his enemies!” In most foreign governments the army is less an external protection than a domestic institution; and their Horse-guards and Home-office are pretty much the same. Still more remarkable,—indeed portentous,—is the advance of the *clerical* power. Even in Protestant Germany it threatens at once civil rights and scientific theology; it chokes the healthy ventilation of thought; sickens the upper atmosphere with perfumes of pietistic cant and ecclesiastical arrogance; and burdens the whole spirit of society. Hopeless and even ludicrous as the attempt may seem to institute a hierarchy and high-priesthood under the genial, human, unsystematic Luther, men are found to perpetrate such

absurdity in his name; and in a recent work of Dr. Kliefoth of Schwerin, which is perhaps the completest manifesto of this ascendant party, we find the whole theory of the Hildebrandic system developed,—reduced indeed to provincial dimensions, but unflinchingly applied to the relations and problems of the hour. Human life would be unbearable under the conditions of ecclesiastical police which he proposes to inflict. Yet this doctrine triumphs; it passes from speculation into action; and every year adds to the number of parishes surrendered to it. We refer incredulous readers, who fancy all danger to religious liberty a thing of impossible recurrence, to the excellent letters of Bunsen (now in course of publication) on freedom of conscience and the rights of the Christian people:* and they will find that jurists of highest name are not ashamed to expound the most servile doctrine; and that no important affair of life—education, marriage, worship, study—is secure from the invasion of spiritual ambition. If these are the phenomena most conspicuous around the birthplace of the Reformation, the tendency of Roman Catholic Europe has spoken plainly enough in the new Austrian Concordat; in which the “indelible character” of the Vatican vindicates its existence, and the genius of the Hapsburg family reasserts its unhappy mixture of tender scruples towards moping monkery with insensibility to the most gigantic civil crimes. Does Lord John Russell,—the captivated plenipotentiary of Vienna,—believe his Protestant eyes, as they glide over that unctuous document? Is it for *this* that he has been so faithful to the principles by which his family acquired “the Bedford-level;” that he has so long preached and practised the doctrine of “civil and religious liberty;” that he wrote the Durham letter; that he lectured about persecution and Galileo at Exeter Hall; that he frequented evangelic and apocalyptic Dr. Cumming;—to see the widest western empire, under his bewitching friend Count Buol, swept clear of toleration,—the schools, the universities, the press, surrendered to the bishops, and the bishops responsible to Rome,—the regulars above the seculars,—the canon law above the civil,—marriage and divorce, the family and the inheritance, submitted to priestly jurisdiction? And that which Austria is, a great part of the Continent tends to become,—a Theocracy intrenching itself in a Camp. Standing armies and standing priesthoods, approaching from opposite sides, drive the civil franchises upon an ever-narrowing ground. The two extreme agencies, which should be reserved as the ruler's exceptional resource, are passing into the ordinary means

* Die Zeichen der Zeit. Briefe an Freunde über die Gewissensfreiheit und das Recht der christlichen Gemeinde. Von Christian Carl Josias Bunsen. 1^{er} und 2^{es} Bändchen. Leipzig, 1855. Brockhaus.

of government. The Genius of supernatural pretension and the twin Giant of material force recognise each other, and advance to the greeting, across the noble field of the healthful natural life; spoiling beneath their tread the free strolling-grounds of happier years, and driving the herd of frightened nations to be crushed between their embrace.

Of these alarming tendencies, we need not say Russia is the very incarnation; the Czar uniting virtually in his own person the attributes of pontiff and autocrat at once. England, on the other hand, presents the natural counterpoise to Russia in this as in so many more obvious respects. Nowhere are the soldier and the priest so completely dispensed with in the work of government as with us. In no other land could the whole army be emptied out without making the slightest difference in the public security and peace. Nowhere do Law and Conscience so nearly blend, and render each other such mutual support. Nowhere is it so impossible to exercise religious oppression; and if ever tried, the attempt must come from private intolerance, while the protection is interposed by public law. Our very life as a nation is bound up with that free worship, free discussion, free teaching, free commerce, which elsewhere are objects of official consternation: the instruments of revolution elsewhere are the conditions of self-sustaining order here. The hieratic distemper which abroad loads an empire with a Concordat can here only irritate a churchwarden with credence-tables and altar-petticoats. In short, we have a faith in natural justice, in social self-government, in religious liberty, in eventual truth, and a jealousy of the surplice except to instruct, and of the sword except to defend us, which are pre-eminently characteristic of us as a people. This national genius is not to be denied its field of external action. It is *a trust* to be guarded for the world, and in times of conflict to serve as a rallying-point of sympathy where kindred tendencies may find support. It ought to have a potential voice in the selection of our alliances. And if this principle of natural affinity is not permitted to take direction of the very next campaign, the most serious anxieties for the political future of Europe will be justified.

Tried by this test, our alliance with Imperial France is not without its drawbacks and insecurities. The throne of our ally is as little independent of military and sacerdotal support as that of Francis Joseph himself; and guards itself not less jealously from the free usages to which we are attached. It cannot be denied, that whatever, as Englishmen, we must consider the noblest and most hopeful elements of Gallican society, are depressed or alienated under the present *régime*. The reformed religion cannot lift up its head; political discussion is extinct; the moral

sciences cannot breathe in the altered air; and the vivid life of literature and art is replaced by ecclesiastical, martial, and industrial *spectacle*. The prætorian rule that occupies the Tuilleries may be a political necessity; but it is not a necessity that can gratify the aspirations of patriotic Frenchmen, or be acceptable to the real sympathies of our own people. We can quite understand the effect upon our American cousins of our close alliance with a government so little realising their hereditary dream of Gallic freedom. Just when they are most disappointed in that Paris which, as republican children of the old world, they have regarded as the very Delphi of their faith,—the μέσον ὀμφαλὸν εὐδένδροιο μητέρος,—they find us drawn to it by closer attraction than had seemed possible before. Their dislike of such a phenomenon is perfectly natural in their position, and corresponds with a part of the mixed and more balanced feeling prevailing here. Are we, then, to repent of our neighbour's alliance, or to hold lightly by it? Far from it: it is the prime condition of the whole enterprise in which we are engaged, and is to be maintained with scrupulous good temper and good faith. But let us not forget France herself in her Court: let us cultivate a good understanding with the enduring nation, rather than with the precarious τυραννίς of the hour. So far are the two things from being incompatible, that the very policy which is best for the friendship of the countries is, we are convinced, best also for the security of the Emperor's throne: while conversely, unless we speak to other sentiments in France than those which are special to the present régime, unless we strike with our ally into a new path, the success of the war, the durability of the alliance, and the continuance of his rule, all become precarious together. The time has arrived when mere military excitement, without a deeper political interest, will fail to maintain the spirit of either country under the sacrifices entailed by the conflict. In France the national feeling has throughout been less energetically roused than in England; and the real secret of the popular sentiment here lies in a vague hope, which it is dangerous longer to disappoint, that the allied powers would finally get rid of Russia as a perpetual menace to the West. If that hope be absurd,—if the "paramount destinies" are to be quoted against it,—a deceptive war must soon languish into a sullen peace. But if not, let the confidence of the nation be justified by a bold cut right into the political pith of the whole question, instead of mere military trimming of the extremities.

The enemies of Lord Palmerston have long prophesied that, as soon as the Crimea was in the hands of the allies, terms would be accepted; because, a new field of operations having then to

be sought, it would be impossible longer to avoid an invasion of Poland,—a measure which, being really efficient, he would never adopt. We do not share in this distrust; but we cannot shut our eyes to the mischievous plausibility given to it by the present aspect of events. Since the fall of Sebastopol nothing has been done in the peninsula; and the intentions of the generals have *twice*, it is believed, been arrested by orders from home. What answer can be given to the complaint, that the opportunities of a fine autumn have been taken out of the hands of the commanders-in-chief? In immediate sequence on this apparent provision for consuming more time in the Crimea come sinister tidings of new Austrian proposals, said to be favourably entertained in London and Paris, yet presumed at Vienna to be so certainly acceptable to Russia, that already the reduction of the Austrian army to its peace-establishment is taking place. If the offered concessions are small,—the mere twaddle of “the four points” over again,—to listen to them is evidence of anxiety in Downing Street *to avoid the next step*. If they are ample,—involving adequate cession of territory as well as promises about creeds and ships,—the tender of them shows how much Russia shrinks from the allies’ next step. In the latter case, peace may be irrecusable; but it will be unsatisfactory, because arresting us in a European duty on the eve of its most effectual performance. In the former case, the havoc which the war has made with the reputations of public men will be complete; and the melancholy impression will become fixed, of a hopeless irresolution or insincerity in the whole class of official statesmen. We know that such impressions may easily be unjust under the complications of *allied* action and deliberation. But they are not the less natural or the less mischievous. And for the constitutional future of this country, for the permanent understanding with France, as well as for the ulterior prospects of Europe, we think it will be unfortunate should winter negotiations come in arrest of the next campaign.

For how is it possible any longer to evade the one simple, direct, practical solution of the whole Russian difficulty,—the restoration of Poland? The hour has come which brings this question legitimately, and in due course of business, on to the table of our council-chamber. Effort enough, and more than enough, has been made to restore the disturbed balance by means of the old forces, and to extort from Austria and Prussia the performance of their duty as frontier-states towards the acknowledged aggressor. They decline the trust, and release Europe from its delusive confidence. Every ingenuity has been exhausted to keep “the nationalities” asleep, to carry on the contest at a distance from every explosive land, and coldly to

repulse the zeal of "dangerous allies." Why longer cripple our strength, that we may spare the weakness, and leave unpunished the past crimes of our enemy, and of the neutrals that are more his than ours? Why starve our enterprise of all moral enthusiasm, by proclaiming that it shall take every circuit to avoid doing a great justice, and rather storm every barricaded path of material force than pronounce the word of Right? Is it not *the fact*, that *the post of barrier-state is vacant*? Then let us declare it so, and see whether there is not a people to fill it. Do you doubt whether there are Poles in Poland?—whether Lord Dudley Stuart did not for the most part bring them to London, and make them tiresome to your charity? Have you been assured at the clubs and in the *salons* that the Lithuanians worship the Czar, that the Volhynian peasantry are happier than ever before, that the country has been glad to forget its history and forego its aspirations? It is easy to put this doctrine to a better test than the assertion of Austrian fashionables and Prussian officials, on which alone it rests. Land an army near the Gulf of Riga, and another at Odessa or Otschakov; and having secured the coasts as a base, advance along the lines of the great rivers with Polish regiments and the national standards in the van; let the one expedition be under French, the other under English command; and after the first great battle, north and south, the problem will find its spontaneous solution, whether in Poland the allies are on a hostile soil, and are received on their march as invaders or as liberators. How but by such experiment,—an exigency of war in 1856, an impossibility in the peace before and after,—can it be known whether the conditions of a restored nationality remain? Where the question is, "What life yet burns in a race so long oppressed?" testimony is worthless, diplomacy is sceptical, discussion has no data; the people themselves, in the languor and inertia of to-day, know nothing of the spirit that may wake in them to-morrow, when new hopes surprise them, and "native music" and historic banners appeal to them again. From the nature of the case, the reality will not confess itself to any commission of inquiry; it will yield itself up only to the interrogation of fact. The Western Governments find themselves at the very crisis for putting the question: if they shrink from it, will it be through fear of its failure, or through fear of its success?

Thus to enter upon a new stage of the war would be at once to ennoble our alliance with France and to cast all our European relations into more natural shape. The resuscitation of Poland not only belongs essentially to the Napoleonic policy, and simply carries out the measures of 1806 and 1809; but deeply touches the sympathies of the French people, who have never permitted the hopes of her exiles to pine away. If it be true

that, under the pressure of great wants and scarce supplies, our neighbours' martial zeal has grown precarious, their Emperor has but to pronounce the word "Warsaw," and the elastic spirit will return, and carry him on flood-tide over every bar of finance that could impede his way. Nor could any thing so strengthen the ties between the allied countries as their union in a positive and constructive, as well as a mere negative and preventive enterprise,—their joint committal to a bold and magnanimous policy, generous to one European people and protective to all. Of all the parties that have reigned in Paris during the last thirty years—Legitimist, Orleanist, Republican, Bonapartist,—the first alone is indifferent to the fate of Poland; nor can any political interest be named that awakens in France so little dissension and rests on so broad a base of public support. It is a noble feature in the character of the French nation, that, while still unable to work out their own social problem, they have ever sympathised with foreign struggles of patriotism, and been quick to pity the exiles of defeated liberty. If, as we believe, this is the deepest and most pervading of all high impulses in our neighbours, to call it into healthy action is their best preparation for dealing with their own interior difficulties,—the happiest moral gymnastic to fill the interregnum of their constitutional existence. When the time shall come to resume their civic life, they will stand before Europe as liberators of others even when not free themselves,—as having accepted indeed a dictator, but one who could interpret their generous inspirations, and was not afraid to ask them for honourable sacrifices. If he would obliterate painful recollections, and provide a future worthy of ambition; and if we are to be in alliance with the soundest, choicest, most abiding elements of his nation,—we must take the mutual pledge to a new political creation on the plains of the Dwina and the Dnieper.

Yet not a creation, but a resurrection. And here lies the peculiarity of the present complication, that the direct way out of it is by a path not revolutionary, but conservative; not cut by military pioneers through the forest of an impenetrable future, but known and trodden as the highway of history. You have not to carve out with the sword a conventional state without physical or moral landmarks, and insulting to every preconception of political or ethnological unity. You have not, like the first Napoleon, to make new surveys, and to cover the walls of your foreign-office with maps bewildering to last season's geography. You have but to take Spruner's *Historic Atlas*, and turn the leaves *backward* till you have rid yourself of the great Muscovite upstart, and left his innovations and ἀπράγματα behind; and there, with tints of the past upon it

to separate it from the Russian waste beyond, lies the very map that you may send to your political engraver. From the Carpathians to the sources of the Wolga, and spanning Europe from the Black Sea to the Baltic, spreads a region that for centuries has been a realm; that was so within living memory; that has a common language and proud traditions to unite its parts, and a western Christianity to separate it from the domains of the Greek church on the east and south;—that has, for its area, nearly five times the population and produce of the rest of European Russia; and supplies to its usurper's army, now in the field against you, 300,000 soldiers, with the greater part of the horses, the grain, the hemp, the hides, that mount and feed and equip them. The mode in which this land was stripped of its independence is kept in remembrance by universal abhorrence, and is admitted by all parties,—yes, even by the minor accomplices themselves,—to be unique in enormity among political crimes. Frederick the Great assures us that “it was the empress Catherine who proposed the partition. I know,” he adds, “that Europe generally believes that the partition of Poland was a consequence of political intrigues imputed to me. However, this is utterly false. After I had proposed divers intermediate measures, it became necessary to have recourse to the partition as the sole measure that could prevent general war. Appearances are deceptive; yet it is by these that the public judge. That which I here say to you is as true as the forty-eighth proposition of Euclid.” Maria Theresa pronounced the act to which she gave her reluctant signature to be not only a great blot upon her reign, but so contrary to all right, that a just Providence would assuredly avenge it on succeeding times. And even Russia, though her empress at the moment was incapable of compunction, has thought it decent to have a little remorse at a safe distance. In 1806, Alexander said to some Polish generals: “The partition of Poland is a great injustice. Had I been on the throne at that period, I would never have consented to it.” At the congress of Vienna, the sincerity of this profession was put to the test. The Duchy of Warsaw having been restored to its independence by Napoleon, the leading statesmen of the allied powers,—Talleyrand, Castlereagh, Metternich, Stein, Hardenberg, Knessebeck,—concurred in urging the re-establishment of Poland, as an indispensable security to Europe. The Emperor Alexander, however, insisted on taking the kingdom to himself and occupying its throne; only to be merged on the first colourable pretext into a province of his empire. Lord Castlereagh vainly endeavoured to change Alexander's resolution; and the correspondence between them manifests so strongly the alarm of the allies at the Russian pretensions, and exhibits,

on the emperor's side, an hypocrisy and rapacity so odious, that, were it not for the confusion of the Elba-escape and the hundred days, the concession ultimately made with so much weakness to so much wickedness would be utterly inexplicable. The clearness with which the German statesmen saw the danger of yielding to the Russian demands may be judged by the following impressive words of Knessebeck,—a man, be it observed, who detested the Poles with true Prussian intensity :

"The future expects from us that we should consolidate that which the exigencies of the times has produced. The common interests now felt by Europe must be preserved, guaranteed, strengthened for the future. . . . Picture to yourself the Turks driven out of Europe ;—what would be the result ? Either Russia would establish herself in the country, or a separate Greek empire would be founded there. Now, is it desirable, either to render Russia more powerful even than she is at present, and to have to cope with the colossus on that side also, or to found a Greek state, which the influence of Russia, as regards religion, commerce, and other relations, would soon transform into a Russian colony ? . . . If Poland be not re-partitioned between the conterminous countries, such as it was in 1805, there are but two alternatives open for that country : either it must become a *Russian province* or an *independent state*. In the latter case, the power of Austria and Prussia will counterbalance that of the new state ; and though its possessions may form a topographical projection of their territory, this will not be more dangerous to them than if those countries belonged to a *state even beforehand stronger than they*. One hundred thousand Poles stationed near Lenczyc may be counterbalanced by one hundred and twenty thousand Prussians collected near Posen or Bromberg ; but five hundred thousand Russians stationed near Lenczyc would blow up the Prussian monarchy. As regards the first of these suppositions, the position of the Polish territories would be disagreeable and annoying to Prussia ; as regards the second, the position of the Russian territories *threatens the very existence, destroys the independence of Prussia*. One may submit to the first ; *in presence of the second life loses its value!* . . . Where an interest of such magnitude is concerned, the gain of a few square miles of territory or of a few thalers of revenue ought not to be taken into consideration. . . . Austria and Prussia have no reason to fear the Poles taking the offensive. . . . The Carpathian Mountains form the true frontiers of Austria. . . . Prussia would attain her object if she were to advance from the Druenca to the Vistula. The safety of the states therefore requires that care be taken to *re-establish Poland in her integrity*, with the exception of the territories necessary for our security ; that is to say, that sincere

and energetic endeavours should be made to form Poland again *into a separate state, into an independent state, governed by sovereigns who shall occupy no other throne.* Should Russia refuse to consent to the integral restoration of Poland, her plans of universal empire will become patent, the liberty of Europe will be threatened from this side, and another war for the purpose of saving the independence of the other states will not be far distant.”*

That war is upon us to-day; and the mistake as well as the guilt of the extinction of Poland is admitted on all sides. With a rare unanimity, politicians of every class—Lords Lyndhurst and Harrowby, Sir R. Peel and Mr. Roebuck—concur here in their verdict; and there is every where a ready-made feeling and preconception to which, in times of difficulty, it is the statesman's highest advantage to be able to appeal. A policy in reversal of a great crime is in itself a power; and a minister who shapes into action the public remorse of forty years, and arms himself with the recorded indignation of the civilised world, is master of priceless elements of success. Why should France and England forego this moral superiority? They have carefully retained it in their possession, through the intervening period, by protest against the annexation in 1830 and the suppression of the Republic of Cracow in 1846. It is irreproachably theirs to use whenever occasion arises; and their statesmen must know that now, if ever, the hour strikes.

Nor do we believe the *right* to re-establish the old military frontier of Germany to be embarrassed by any insuperable *difficulty*. You want to be secure from the aggressive designs of St. Petersburg. The very nation which, with Hungary and Venice, long garrisoned eastern Europe against the Ottoman advance, still lives upon the soil, and is ready for the same duty against a new barbarism. It is easy to *desire* and *imagine* a better protection, to complain of the responsibility of re-creating it, and to draw pictures of possible failure. But where is the practical measure of protection comparable with this in facility and completeness? Will you be content with dismantling the maritime fortresses of the Czar, and keeping his war-ships under water? His power is not naval, but continental; and it is by land that he will win the coasts of the Archipelago and the North Sea. Will you find your trusty police in the vigour of Turkey? or in the good faith and power of Austria? Will you set up the Principalities to keep watch and ward for you? It has already exceeded all the resources of your diplomacy and arms to save them from a double invasion and every curse permitted by the indulgence of a Vienna war-office. Besides, is it easier to consolidate a new people, or to bid

* The Polish Question from the German Point of View, p. 28.

an old one rise from its oppression and live again? Nations are not made in a day, or extinguished in a generation; but, in spite of energetic protocols, clean or dusty, remain for you a weakness or a power according to laws of God that are never moth-eaten. If the Western Powers, releasing themselves and each other from their original disclaimer of territorial designs, were to plant themselves on the Euxine, they would expose themselves to the charge of selfish aggrandisement and uncalled-for harshness towards a vanquished foe. In short, whilst Russia protrudes with her choicest provinces into the midst of Europe, with her grasping right hand suspended over Prussia and her left over Austria, holding both in permanent asphyxia, it is vain to seek for any real arrest of her great game. It is a visible check-mate; and play as you will the little pawns that are scattered on the board, they must all be knocked off in turn, and the stake be lost.

On the other hand, let Poland be once interposed between Europe and the Muscovite, and hold its line of posts from sea to sea; and there is scarcely a continental question that is not simplified, or a small progressive state that does not receive a new value in the scale. No remark is more common and less wise than that the German states, being the most deeply interested in dangers from the east, ought to take the lead in any reconstruction of Poland and resistance to Russia. Precisely because their interest is so intense, their participation is impossible. They are paralysed by their dependent position, and cannot take the initiative in a move which nevertheless they would gladly see accomplished. They took their slices of Polish territory against their own convictions, and because otherwise Russia would have seized the whole; and, to be delivered from contact with their terrible patron, they would readily give them back, with some slight and unimportant exception. The pamphlet of "the German Statesman" discusses this question most ably, and shows that the courts of Vienna and Berlin have far stronger grounds than in 1815 for desiring to see a sovereign state at Warsaw; and are not likely tenaciously to withhold the contribution of their Polish provinces, if the sacrifice be reasonably compensated, and do not include the Dantzic littoral connecting East Prussia with West. Indeed, the German question would be thus disencumbered from an entanglement which, had there been no other difficulty, would have sufficed in 1848 to prevent its solution. No nationality is more intolerant of foreign elements than the Teutonic; and the determination of Austria to be admitted *integrally* into the projected German unity, bringing all her non-German subjects with her, was one main topic of hopeless dissension at the Frankfort assembly; while the duplicity of Prussia, in first commencing and then cancelling the separate organisation of Posen, embroiled

the proceedings from another side. "What to do with the Poles," was the provoking problem that broke in upon the game and marred it; bringing Russian threats to bear upon the deliberation, and with their dull pressure finally wear out the paroxysm of German enthusiasm. Had Poland existed as an independent state, the experiment at Frankfort would have been sheltered from the disturbance of St. Petersburg, and cleared from an obtrusive foreign element that gave it an artificial complexity. The non-existence of Poland is the vassalage of Germany.

The effect of a restoration on the Vistula would no doubt be to alter the present balance between the two great German states. Prussia, compensated for the loss of Posen at the expense of a few mediatised grand-dukes, would gain, not only in compactness, but in influence, by becoming *purely German*. Her political risks would be diminished; her probable future aggrandised. Austria, on the other hand, is, in the first place, less easy to compensate for the surrender of Galicia; and, in the next, is brought, by the reappearance of Poland, visibly nearer to the dangers that always menace her empire. A free nation on one side of the Carpathians cannot coexist with a suppressed people on the other: Vienna will not proceed far in the "assimilation of Hungary" in the face of an independent Warsaw. Indeed, we are astonished that this consideration did not occur to the "German Statesman" as fatal to his proposal that the *Principalities* be given as the equivalent for Galicia: provinces which a successful rising in Hungary would wholly cut off from communication with the rest of the empire, would be but insecure payment for the recognition of a free Poland. Western Europe will never consent, we trust, to prejudice the Hungarian cause by surrendering the Siebenbürgen to the Austrian embrace, and perpetuating the tyranny that now wantons at Bucharest and Jassy. It is time that the Viennese empire be stopped in its progress eastwards,—be cut off from Russian contact,—and be brought within the salutary influence of Western opinion and civilised rivalries. So devoutly Catholic a state is unfit to govern countries of Greek or mixed religions; and we would rather see her extension further *up* the Danube than further *down*. Old as her evil ways are, we should not despair of amendment, did she act as a purely South-German power, from her own hereditary states as a centre. At all events, indemnification for Galicia must be so devised as rather to consolidate Germany than to distribute Austria.

If the restoration of Poland is a step towards German unity on the one hand, and towards Hungarian independence on the other, it releases the Danubian provinces from Muscovite in-

trigues and periodic foreign occupation. Moldavia, lying between Hungary and Poland, Wallachia between Hungary and Turkey, would be able to develop their resources, and wield their institutions, undisturbed by the presence of aggressive states. There seems no urgent call for any change in their old relations to the Porte, which were faulty chiefly from sources of weakness and interference which would then be cut off. The three states, — Poland, Hungary, Turkey, — historically trained to common action in various combinations, would form natural allies; and each one of them having a separate and deepest grudge against Russia, their union, secured not less by moral than by material interests, would effectually bar the advance of a Tartar power upon Europe. It is the fashion with diplomatists of the conventional school to profess reliance on Austria as holding the Eastern Protectorate of the Continent. But except among sexagenarian statesmen and their blind followers, we venture to say there is not a well-informed politician in Europe who does not know the vanity of this reliance, and feel perfectly assured that the real alternative for the civilised world is, to succumb to "the paramount destinies," or to establish the cordon of free states. Whatever may ultimately become of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, the fate of Constantinople is, by their creation, rescued from prejudice, and detached from the reversionary legacies of Peter the Great. Time is thus secured for the undisturbed operation of natural causes, political and ethnological, in the East; and the problem, removed from the presence of a dictatorial coercion, and surrounded by new and healthier conditions, cannot fail to receive a less fatal solution than we should otherwise apprehend. By that time Italy will be something more, we trust, than "a geographical expression;" and the Mediterranean, no longer surrounded by one power and many weaknesses, will have escaped the risk of becoming either "a French lake" or an appendage to the Euxine.

With what double-quick time "the paramount destinies" may overtake the paralysed continent, if the present crisis be lost, one single consideration will show. Reconstitute Poland: and you compel Russia to furnish the barrier against herself; you recruit your battalions of defence from her own army of aggression, and gain a twofold strength. Neglect and abandon Poland: and then, despairing of the West, which has only pitied and betrayed her, she will turn to the East with avenging reconciliation, accept her "assimilation," and fulfil her destinies as the van-guard of attack on Europe instead of the rear-guard of defence. It is not to be supposed that sixteen millions of men, constituting the very pith of the Slavonic stem, imparting the vital force to any power that holds them, — men with a herit-

age of historic recollections kept fresh by recent heroism and endeared by protracted exile,—men united in the belief of a great future for them, and restless because watching for its approach,—will be content to sink into negation and play no part upon the world. Deny a future to their *country*, and they will take it for their *race*. The Slavonic family numbers some eighty millions, protruded in distinct advance-posts into every state of Eastern Europe, but in Poland alone forming an unbroken and homogeneous mass. The whole of this family is possessed, as by a religion, with the belief that the next volume of the world's history is to be theirs; that as other tribes are frittered into disunion or wear out, their compact body is to move westward and take its turn of dominion. This exciting dream the Czar does not neglect to humour and sustain. While we poor sceptics are ashamed to appeal to any manly faith and generous enthusiasm, he reigns and conquers by the power of intense and ambitious superstitions. He turns to the South, and lifts the standard of the Greek cross. He turns to the West, and shows the banner of Panslavism ready to be unfurled. The oppressions of orthodox Christendom serve his purpose with the foreign Hellenes, and the aspirations of race with the Catholic Poles. Of the former weapon you have hoped to deprive him by securing to the Greek Christians their rights; you must turn the latter against him by giving the Poles a career. If you do not make haste to divide the Slaves politically, they will ere long flow together ethnologically, and sweep with a wave of irresistible advance over the lands of riper civilisation. In this form, if you provide no better, will come the answer to the indolent question of the political unbeliever—"But *is* there a Poland?" At the head of the Russian crusade, bearing the Panslavic flag, with Slovaks and Pomeranians flocking round them as they go, leaving the wreck of Turkey to Bulgarians and Serbs, exploding Austria by firing Croats, and Tschechs, and Dalmatians at once, they will bring their reply, "Yes, here we are!" In short, this people, scattered, oppressed, disappointed of its destinies, yet still a people with a memory and a hope is and must remain a power;—to-day, mainly in the hands of our enemy; to-morrow, if we will, our bulwark against him;—but failing this, turning the next day into the retributive instrument by which he becomes the scourge of the world. Make of Warsaw a new Slavonic centre,—Western, Catholic, and free; and the old political and religious antagonism towards Moscow will suppress the incipient ethnological sympathy; will turn it from concurrence into competition; and direct the face of patriotic ambition eastward instead of westward. It has become the fashion to treat this opinion as the special crotchet of refugees and democrats. It

was not so regarded when it was last discussed by the assembled diplomatists of Europe; it is not so regarded, we are convinced, by any first-class statesman living now. The French Emperor and Lord Palmerston do not, we imagine, dissent from the judgment of Talleyrand, "that the one supreme question for Europe is the Polish; that the partition of that country is and must remain the presage and cause of endless disturbances; that only in its restoration is any security for the Continent to be found." They know the significance of Metternich's emphatic warning to Hardenberg,—“that posterity would never forgive this generation, if the opportunity were lost of limiting Russia by the re-establishment of Poland; and that Austria had better perish than permit the annexation of Warsaw.”* They see clearly enough the truth of Lord Castlereagh's assertion, that “if Russia is hereafter to wield a Polish national army as a new and most formidable instrument of war,”—“the adjacent powers cannot live in security and peace, in the presence of such a military power, when stript of their frontiers; nor will Europe feel satisfied with that equilibrium for its daily protection which requires its whole military power to be displaced and put in motion upon every aberration of a particular state from the line of duty.”† They know that time has detracted nothing from the justice of these sentiments. But financial necessity in the one country, parliamentary government in the other, has established a habit of political dependence on middle-class and moneyed opinion,—an opinion sensitive to sacrifice, inapprehensive of historical relations, and sceptical of international dangers. Hence our statesmen fear to rely upon their own convictions; and act less on the policy they would ultimately approve than on computation of the support immediately at hand. At the present crisis this moral cowardice is, we believe, a complete mistake. Let them frankly ask support from the two nations for a bold and statesman-like enterprise in Poland, and party feeling and selfish discontent will be unable to show their heads. Let them ask no leave and no advice at Vienna and Berlin; and, if they only contrive to succeed, they will get plenty of support even thence. The pressure of Russia once lifted off, German sentiments will begin to return; the opinions of a better age of German statesmen will recover their weight; and the shuffling neutrality of courts be exchanged for the hearty good-will of peoples.

The policy which we have indicated could not fail to alter the attitude of the Northern as well as the German powers. In the absence of any counterbalancing state upon the Baltic ex-

* Gervinus's *Geschichte des 19ten Jahrhunderts*, i. 209.

† Castlereagh Correspondence with the Emperor Alexander, p. 23.

cept the Prussian and the Scandinavian as at present defined, it is vain to expect active co-operation in the war from Denmark or Sweden. As on the Continent, so within the Sound, we encounter nothing but Russia at first-hand or Russia at second-hand;—but still every where Russia. Has she not a reversionary interest in the Danish crown? Does she not stand virtually at the gates of Stockholm? Is it forgotten by either, how she took Norway from the one to give it to the other, and awarded Finland to herself? Has she not, within two years, set her thievish eyes on Finmark, and despatched “summer travellers” to survey by stealth the lines of road, and take soundings in Fiords where the water is never frozen and the largest navy might always lie? In the face of a neighbour whose power and inclinations are alike unchastened, what help can these second-rate states dare to give us? King Oscar may well fear that Finland, if restored to him at the expense of a Russia otherwise entire, would be but a fatal gift, which no outside Atlantic alliances could enable him to hold; and which would never be repaid without a huge territorial usury, if not the forfeiture of a crown. But with a restored Poland at Riga it would be otherwise. The territories bordering on the Neva would be enclosed between two states with no probable causes of mutual collision, and with a common paramount interest in preventing the aggrandisement of the Czars. An advance on Finland could be taken in the rear from Courland. The whole group of countries now paralysed by a terror that is ubiquitous would breathe again, and be free both to develop their interior life and to ally themselves by their natural affinities. North Germany, now misrepresented by its courts and benumbed by its officialism, would assert its true genius again, and escape from federal intrigues and military drill into national existence. The lands of the Northmen and the Danes, so akin to our own in habits, language, and feeling, would join us in defending the freedom of the seas, in favouring the development of secondary nations, and checking any tendency to huge uniformity of empire. The countries of Luther, of Gustavus Adolphus, and of the Princes of Orange would own with us the deep pledges which their history and ours has given to the Reformation; and refuse to surrender the principles of Protestant civilisation to any returning sacerdotalism. And wherever, as in Sardinia, in Poland, (may we not add, in Italy and in Hungary?) the aspiration after political liberty has sprung direct out of the bosom of the old church without passing through the medium of a religious revolution the alliance of France, Catholic but not papal, with England conservative though Protestant and free, against the living embodiment of hierarchical and military aggression, may well set at

rest ecclesiastic scruples, and show that around the standard now raised the progressive tendencies of civilised Europe, be the baptism that consecrates them what it may, are assembling themselves for mutual protection. England is prepared to be faithful to such an alliance. She is falsely accused, as an entire people, of selfish indifference to the political courses of the out-lying world. Show her a nation, or group of nations, free of the soldier, free of the priest, reverent to law, resolute for justice, trusting in reality and truth; and we believe she will own, at any sacrifice, her natural affinity. Till international relations are determined less by dynastic diplomacy and more by these inartificial attractions, European societies must remain in the most precarious condition. From the Tuscan Sea to the North Cape, the Continent has scarcely a government that is not either paralysed or retrograde,—that either dares to win or has not utterly forfeited the active loyalty of its best subjects. Yet in every country the elements of regeneration abound, either motionless in despondency or wildly tossing about for want of sympathy and guidance. In the east of Europe is a power that systematically uses for her own ends the weaknesses, the jealousies, the fears, the bigotries of courts and hierarchies. In the west let there be, in expression of its own genius and for the well-being of the world, an alliance around which the strength, the aspirations, the hopes and highest faith of nations may rally and find support. We ask for no propagandism, but only for self-protection to the ripest fruits of political experience and developed Christianity. We would raise a breakwater against any return of the tide of barbarism, which has now had its ebb of centuries, and which nothing but the fierce east-wind can hurl upon us again. And the contribution to these ends for which we pray in 1855 is—A CAMPAIGN IN POLAND.

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[A strange life ruggedly told. The Indian glossaries are interesting to the philologist.]

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[TURN OVER.]

THE SUPPLEMENTS.

AT the commencement of THE SPECTATOR, in July 1828, the size of the journal was 16 pages; the price ninepence. It was a time of few events and little excitement; and the neutral character of current politics was reflected in the very title chosen for the paper, which implied no more than a position of calm *looking-on*. The smooth surface of public affairs was ruffled in the following year by the Catholic Emancipation contest, and agitated still more in 1830, '31, and '32, by the storms which preceded and accompanied the passing of the Reform Bill. The Spectator did not deem it a part of good citizenship to remain neutral in those civil wars, but applied itself to aid the cause it thought right, according to its ability. For the extended field of observation and commentary more space became necessary: the journal was enlarged from the original 16 pages to 24 pages, and the price was raised from ninepence to a shilling. In 1836, when the newspaper stamp-duty was lowered from fourpence to a penny, the price of The Spectator was reduced to ninepence. In July last, when the penny stamp ceased to be compulsory, (except for free transmission by post,) an unstamped impression was prepared—price *eightpence*; while the stamped copies, possessing the privilege of free transmission and retransmission by post, remained fixed at the old price—*ninepence*. The reason why no further reduction took place then, or is intended now, was intimated in the publication of June 23, 1855. (*See below.**)

Unwieldy bulk in a newspaper is an inconvenience to the reader. By the pains bestowed on the selection and condensation of materials, THE SPECTATOR has generally found its present size sufficient for a reflex of the week; but when an extraordinary interest in public events, or a pressure of advertisements, has required an occasional increase of space, gratuitous Supplements have been added, to avoid the omission or curtailment of essential departments. To correspond more closely with the periodical recurrence of some demands of a fixed character, it is now proposed to publish a Supplement regularly on the first Saturday of each month, for the disposal of temporary superabundance, but not to supersede intermediate Supplements, should circumstances require them. The series will commence on Saturday the 5th January 1856. To those who have had an opportunity of consulting the Supplements issued by The Spectator in times past, it is unnecessary to say that the MONTHLY SUPPLEMENTS will not be stuffed with inferior matter, but composed of the best materials the Editor can command.

* From the Spectator, June 23, 1855.

"Since the Newspaper Stamp question took a practical shape, we have received some friendly and flattering suggestions to consider, on this occasion, whether a reduction of the price of the Spectator would not be for our interest, as tending to enlarge the circulation and influence (one of the suggesters was pleased to say 'the salutary influence') of the paper. The subject had not escaped our attention; but there are obstacles which our wellwishers had overlooked. As regards 'influence,' that is in a great degree independent of the number of copies circulated, arising chiefly from the *classes* of readers among whom the paper circulates. A small reduction of price would hardly increase our circulation by a score of copies; it would be an unimportant gain to each subscriber of the class that purchase the Spectator; and even the smallest practical reduction—say a halfpenny on each copy—would cause a serious loss of income to the proprietor.

"A very large numerical circulation of the Spectator is highly improbable. This journal is not, and never has been, the organ of a political party; on the contrary, it has had occasion to oppose all parties in turn, and that at times when men least brook opposition. Nor is it the cue of the Spectator

to lend itself to private 'interests,' personal or corporate. One of the surest cards in this country for those who are willing to play it is cant—that is, exaggerated sentiments expressed in stereotyped phrases; and of these, the cant of Liberalism, the cant of religious Sectarianism, and the cant of Philanthropy, are profitable to the professors, but they lie out of our line.

"Readers who will bear to have their opinions sometimes opposed, their eagerness held in habitual check, their exaggeration of the importance of some temporary aim reduced to just dimensions, and their objects, according to their own ideas, possibly thwarted, are far less numerous than those of the contrary temper; they will be drawn from the élite of mutually opposite parties; and the journalist who addresses them—regarding truth before all things, and striving to exhibit the truth with dispassionate fairness—incur the constant risk of offending numbers. Yet the Spectator, in its career of seven-and-twenty years, has found or created a public sufficient to afford the undertaking an encouraging if not a very gainful support. That support will probably be continued in spite of the rage for novelty and 'cheapness.'"

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In the care exercised to secure accuracy of text, as well as to sustain the quality of the Volumes, it has been the desire of all concerned honourably to fulfil their engagements to the Subscribers. So far as quantity of matter is concerned, each year's issue has exceeded the specified number of pages.

The attention of the Press to the Volumes as they are issued, calls again for an expression of gratitude from both Editor and Publisher. They are sensible of the important aid which so many of the conductors of public journals have rendered them, and shall endeavour to merit for the future Volumes the same favourable notice.

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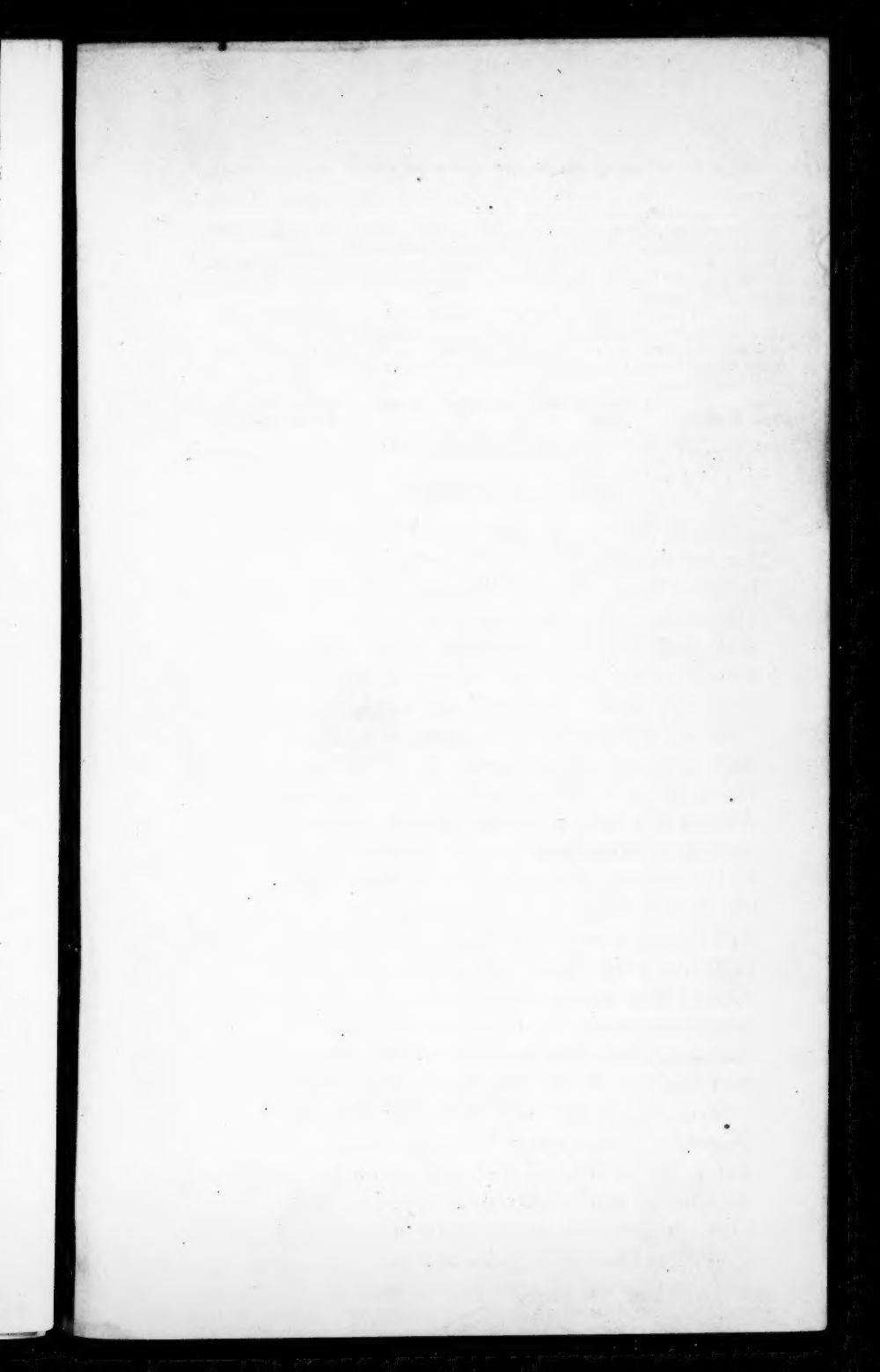
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The Publisher has the gratification of submitting the following extracts from notices which have recently

¹ The volume itself is all that could be wished by the subscribers to Mr Nichol's Library Edition of the Poets as to undiminished carefulness of production and beauty of appearance.

² We felt, after the commencement of this very handsome and surprisingly cheap series, some doubts as to the possibility of its being continued in the style of excellence and beauty with which it had been begun, but the publisher has actually surpassed his promise.

³ We cannot sufficiently express our gratitude to Mr Nichol for the taste and enterprise which led him to place in the hands of the British public this fine edition of our classic poets. It will do lasting credit to both publisher and editor.

⁴ It is only justice to the publisher to add, that, notwithstanding the advance which has taken place in the price of material since this series was first projected, he continues conscientiously to keep faith with his subscribers, the "getting up" of the volumes still combining elegance with substantiality.

⁵ The style in which these volumes have been produced is altogether so unexceptionable, both as regards quality and price, that Mr Nichol deserves the gratitude of the reading public.

⁶ An edition of the British Poets was never before presented to the British people so worthy of both, with so much beauty and correctness of typography, and at a cost so small.

⁷ Mr Nichol's Edition of the Poets fully sustains its reputation for combining cheapness with elegance in every department.

⁸ Nothing that has issued from the American press, we boldly assert, can bear any comparison with Mr Nichol's editions.

⁹ We always give a cordial welcome to these volumes of Mr Nichol's, because we regard them as in many respects the best issue of the British Poets of the present day. Their cheapness is undoubted; equally so the care with which they are edited.

¹⁰ With respect to this series, it is only necessary to repeat, in a word, the favourable opinion expressed in our former notices, of the splendid getting-up of the volumes.

¹¹ These volumes are the latest addition to Mr Nichol's excellent series of the Standard Poets. Both print and paper are equal in quality to those which won our favour for the previous volumes, and we repeat, once more, that the price is surprisingly low.

¹² This truly national undertaking continues to pursue "the even tenor of its way," while every succeeding volume forms a proof of the pledge Mr Nichol gave at the outset.

¹³ We have more than once acknowledged our obligation to Mr Nichol for the excellent service he is rendering by his uniform edition of the English Poets, and we only now express a hope that his spirited enterprise is as successful in a mercantile point of view as it richly deserves to be.

¹⁴ The publisher has more than kept faith with the public, and has really exceeded his promises. Mr Gillfillan, too, has surpassed our expectations, and disappointed some of the fears we had of him.

¹⁵ Mr Nichol continues his enterprise with much honourable fidelity both to the public and himself.

¹⁶ The spirited publisher and talented editor have fully redeemed the pledge they gave at the outset, to produce a work distinguished by "accuracy of text, elegance of appearance, and extreme cheapness."

¹⁷ There is in every succeeding volume, originality, freshness, beauty, and fulness, which leaves nothing to be desired.

¹⁸ The volume, like its predecessors, is beautifully printed, and the whole work, in design and execution is a credit to editor and publisher.

¹⁹ As in former volumes, this specimen is distinguished by elegance of type, beauty of paper, &c.

²⁰ It is universally acknowledged to be the best, and certainly the cheapest, edition of the Poets yet offered to the public.

²¹ One of this year's issue of Nichol's inimitable series of the British Poets.

²² This noble edition of the Poets is going on with steady progress.

²³ The volume under notice is of the good old handsome "Library" sort, and is very beautifully and clearly printed.

²⁴ All the volumes published in this series appear to have been very carefully prepared.

¹ Nonconformist.

² Liverpool Standard.

³ Scottish Guardian.

⁴ Caledon Mercury.

⁵ The Rock.

⁶ Watchman.

⁷ Worcester Chronicle.

⁸ Canad. News Letter.

⁹ Camb. Chronicle.

¹⁰ Aberdeen Journal.

¹¹ Clerical Journal.

¹² Bury Free Press.

¹³ Wesleyan Times.

¹⁴ York Herald.

¹⁵ Essex Herald.

¹⁶ Brechin Adver.

¹⁷ Scarborough Gaz.

¹⁸ Derby Reporter.

¹⁹ Bell's Messenger.

²⁰ Bucks Chronicle.

²¹ Greenock Adver.

²² Dumfries Herald.

²³ The Leader.

²⁴ Woolmer's Gazette.

LIBRARY EDITION OF THE BRITISH

which have recently appeared of the Series. At the outset, the volumes were stated to be "unimpeachable on the score of accuracy, and a glory of typography,"—"a ma

²⁵ A series which promises to be one of the cheapest and best reprints with which the public has been lately favoured.

²⁶ Nichol's beautiful and marvellously cheap edition of the British Poets, so well edited by Mr Gilfillan.

²⁷ This edition of the Poets, in point of type, and finish, and cheapness, is one of the best we know of, and it well deserves the title of the "Library Edition."

²⁸ This edition of the Poets, as regards paper, printing, binding, and editing, is by far the best yet published.

²⁹ Another of Mr Nichol's beautifully got-up edition of the British Poets.

³⁰ In every respect an admirable Library Edition.

³¹ Estimated as a whole, this edition is entitled to the most unmeasured commendation.

³² We trust that a work, so worthy in every respect of public support, will receive this year a very large accession of subscribers.

³³ The excellent manner in which the volumes are got up, speaks well for the enterprise of the publisher.

³⁴ This volume well sustains the high excellence of the series.

³⁵ Shall we say one word more to the commendations we have oft given to the typographical accuracy and beauty of paper and binding in which this edition is presented to the public, at a cost altogether marvellously cheap.

³⁶ We regard this "Library Edition of the Poets," of which these volumes form a part, as an important and valuable addition to the current literature of the day.

³⁷ Well does it sustain the character which this series has already acquired.

³⁸ The publisher of this best of all cheap editions of the Poets has kept faith with the subscribers in maintaining its admirable typographical and other qualities.

³⁹ These beautiful volumes well sustain the high character which this edition of the British Poets has deservedly acquired.

⁴⁰ This series of charming volumes, however, continues as it began, very cheap and very excellent.

⁴¹ The volume under consideration forms no exception to the general excellence which has characterised its predecessors.

⁴² We have, in noticing former volumes of this series, spoken of its surpassing excellence as regards paper, typography, and binding. It is indeed a magnificent edition of the British Poets.

⁴³ No such library edition of the Poets has yet appeared. The present volume fully sustains the expectations of its predecessors.

⁴⁴ Good faith has been kept with the subscribers, and the editor throws a freshness over the well-known works of our great poets by lively and sparkling biography.

⁴⁵ The whole of this series is handsomely printed, and the short explanatory notes are for the most part satisfactory.

⁴⁶ It is our pleasing duty to testify to the undiminished excellence of the getting-up, and to the care and ability of the editorial superintendence.

⁴⁷ We have before expressed our approval of this cheap and handsome publication.

⁴⁸ It is enough to say, it is worthy of being placed alongside of its predecessors, and of the best standard editions of the first literary productions of our country.

⁴⁹ The volumes are produced in a style and at a price which must excite the surprise and admiration of all readers and collectors.

⁵⁰ The editor, the publisher, and printer, have most successfully combined in producing a work of rare excellence, and which possesses the additional recommendation of being published at a most moderate price.

⁵¹ So far, in what relates to the fulfilment of the publisher's promises toward the public, the undertaking has proceeded in a most satisfactory manner, nor is less credit due to Mr Gilfillan for the spirit in which his editorial duties have been discharged.

⁵² We cannot speak too highly of the manner in which this magnificent edition of the British Poets is produced.

⁵³ It will be an honour to the taste and judgment of this country, if this really handsome edition of the Poets find more than a poet's corner in every library.

⁵⁴ These beautiful volumes afford ample evidence of the intention of the enterprising publisher to carry out to the utmost his contract with subscribers.

⁵⁵ We are bound to state that the public notwithstanding the increased price of paper

⁵⁶ There is no doubt that it will supercede serves to do.

⁵⁷ We have already taken occasion to be the British Poets of which these volumes to confirm the highly favourable impression

⁵⁸ The editor and the publisher have fair the edition is decidedly the best and cheap British press.

⁵⁹ Mr Nichol has studied to retain the style in which the book is got up.

⁶⁰ The distinctive feature of this edition

⁶¹ This volume, with all Churchill's poem and does credit to the press of Mr Nichol.

⁶² The purchaser of Nichol's Library Edition too, for these two beautiful and rich volumes

⁶³ This volume merits, equally with its predecessors

⁶⁴ The series of the British classics, to the publisher credit.

⁶⁵ The subscribers to this elegant Library complain of any breach of faith on the part

⁶⁶ Of all the volumes which have presented contradiction, that the present is the cheapest

⁶⁷ The recent additions to this singular our impressions of their value as a permanent

⁶⁸ The book is got up in the same style as the predecessors.

⁶⁹ The remarkably cheap and handsome continues to make satisfactory progress so far

⁷⁰ Of the whole series, so far as it has yetness and durability of appearance, with

⁷¹ The critical acumen with which the poemveyed, is no mean feature in this beautiful

⁷² The present is in every respect worthy praise is scarcely possible.

⁷³ It is gratifying to observe that this edition to maintain the character with which it started

⁷⁴ We must pay our tribute to the patrons, as displayed in the continued excellence literary, typographical, &c. &c.

⁷⁵ The volumes are well fitted to occasion either or the editor are concerned.

⁷⁶ We ought rather to congratulate the progress so far that its success is assured doubtful at the commencement.

⁷⁷ Has all the recommendations of hands up, combined with great moderation in price

⁷⁸ It gives us pleasure to state that the getting-up.

⁷⁹ The volume, we need hardly remark the British Poets," in many respects the the British public.

⁸⁰ We do trust that the publisher of this the British Poets meets with that liberal generous and noble enterprise justly entitled

⁸¹ We repeat emphatically the recommendation given to the series.

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| ²⁵ Border Advertiser. | ²⁶ Gloucester Jour. | ²⁷ Leicester Mercury. | ²⁸ Notting. Journal. |
| ²⁹ Notting. Review. | ³⁰ Northern Warder. | ³¹ Dumfries Stand. | ³² Newcastle Journal. |
| ³³ Illust. Lond. Mag. | ³⁴ Kelso Chronicle. | ³⁵ Freeman. | ³⁶ Durham Chronicle. |
| ³⁷ Norfolk Chronicle. | ³⁸ Stroud Free Press. | ³⁹ Sherborne Journal. | ⁴⁰ Midland Counties Herald. |
| ⁴¹ Dumfries Courier. | ⁴² Stirling Journal. | ⁴³ Guardian. | ⁴⁴ County Herald. |
| ⁴⁵ Hull Packet. | ⁴⁶ Dundee Advertiser. | ⁴⁷ Daily Mail. | ⁴⁸ Bath Journal. |
| ⁴⁹ Doncaster Gazette. | ⁵⁰ Monitor. | ⁵¹ Journal of Sacred Literature. | ⁵² Norfolk News. |
| ⁵³ Gloucester Chron. | ⁵⁴ Leeds Times. | | |

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| ⁵⁵ Local Preachers' Magazine. | ⁵⁶ Brighton Gazette. |
| ⁵⁷ Chester Chronicle. | ⁵⁸ Brighton Herald. |
| ⁵⁹ Sunderland Herald. | ⁶⁰ Christian News. |
| ⁶¹ Peebleshire Advertiser. | ⁶² Derby Mercury. |
| ⁶³ Brighton Examiner. | ⁶⁴ Express. |
| | ⁶⁵ Essex and W. Suffolk Gazette. |
| | ⁶⁶ Exeter Gazette. |

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umes are the latest addition to Mr Nichol's excellent series of the Stanboth print and paper are equal in quality to those which won our favour

a volumes, and we repeat, once more, that the price is surprisingly low. a national undertaking continues to pursue "the even tenor of its way,"

ceeding volume forms a proof of the pledge Mr Nichol gave at the outset. more than once acknowledged our obligation to Mr Nichol for the excel-

is rendering by his uniform edition of the English Poets, and we only hope that his spirited enterprise is as successful in a mercantile point

chly deserves to be. her has more than kept faith with the public, and has really exceeded

Mr Gilfillan, too, has surpassed our expectations, and disappointed some had of him.

l continues his enterprise with much honourable fidelity both to the self.

ed publisher and talented editor have fully redeemed the pledge they set, to produce a work distinguished by "accuracy of text, elegance of

extreme cheapness." n every succeeding volume, originality, freshness, beauty, and fulness,

othing to be desired. e, like its predecessors, is beautifully printed, and the whole work, in

is a credit to editor and publisher. er volumes, this specimen is distinguished by elegance of type, beauty

really acknowledged to be the best, and certainly the cheapest, edition offered to the public.

year's issue of Nichol's inimitable series of the British Poets. edition of the Poets is going on with steady progress.

e under notice is of the good old handsome "Library" sort, and is very clearly printed.

mes published in this series appear to have been very carefully prepared.

²⁵ A series which promises to be one of the cheapest and best reprints with which the public has been lately favoured.

²⁶ Nichol's beautiful and marvellously cheap edition of the British Poets, so well edited by Mr Gilfillan.

²⁷ This edition of the Poets, in point of type, and finish, and cheapness, is one of the best we know of, and it well deserves the title of the "Library Edition."

²⁸ This edition of the Poets, as regards paper, printing, binding, and editing, is by far the best yet published.

²⁹ Another of Mr Nichol's beautifully got-up edition of the British Poets.

³⁰ In every respect an admirable Library Edition.

³¹ Estimated as a whole, this edition is entitled to the most unmeasured commendation.

³² We trust that a work, so worthy in every respect of public support, will receive this year a very large accession of subscribers.

³³ The excellent manner in which the volumes are got up, speaks well for the enterprise of the publisher.

³⁴ This volume well sustains the high excellence of the series.

³⁵ Shall we say one word more to the commendations we have oft given to the typographical accuracy and beauty of paper and binding in which this edition is presented to the public, at a cost altogether marvellously cheap.

³⁶ We regard this "Library Edition of the Poets," of which these volumes form a part, as an important and valuable addition to the current literature of the day.

³⁷ Well does it sustain the character which this series has already acquired.

³⁸ The publisher of this best of all cheap editions of the Poets has kept faith with the subscribers in maintaining its admirable typographical and other qualities.

³⁹ These beautiful volumes well sustain the high character which this edition of the British Poets has deservedly acquired.

⁴⁰ This series of charming volumes, however, continues as it began, very cheap and very excellent.

⁴¹ The volume under consideration forms no exception to the general excellence which has characterised its predecessors.

⁴² We have, in noticing former volumes of this series, spoken of its surpassing excellence as regards paper, typography, and binding. It is indeed a magnificent edition of the British Poets.

⁴³ No such library edition of the Poets has yet appeared. The present volume fully sustains the expectations of its predecessors.

⁴⁴ Good faith has been kept with the subscribers, and the editor throws a freshness over the well-known works of our great poets by lively and sparkling biography.

⁴⁵ The whole of this series is handsomely printed, and the short explanatory notes are for the most part satisfactory.

⁴⁶ It is our pleasing duty to testify to the undiminished excellence of the getting-up, and to the care and ability of the editorial superintendence.

⁴⁷ We have before expressed our approval of this cheap and handsome publication.

⁴⁸ It is enough to say, it is worthy of being placed alongside of its predecessors, and of the best standard editions of the first literary productions of our country.

⁴⁹ The volumes are produced in a style and at a price which must excite the surprise and admiration of all readers and collectors.

⁵⁰ The editor, the publisher, and printer, have most successfully combined in producing a work of rare excellence, and which possesses the additional recommendation of being published at a most moderate price.

⁵¹ So far, in what relates to the fulfilment of the publisher's promises toward the public, the undertaking has proceeded in a most satisfactory manner, nor is less credit due to Mr Gilfillan for the spirit in which his editorial duties have been discharged.

⁵² We cannot speak too highly of the manner in which this magnificent edition of the British Poets is produced.

⁵³ It will be an honour to the taste and judgment of this country, if this really handsome edition of the Poets find more than a poet's corner in every library.

⁵⁴ These beautiful volumes afford ample evidence of the intention of the enterprising publisher to carry out to the utmost his contract with subscribers.

⁵⁵ Border Advertiser.

⁵⁶ Notting. Review.

⁵⁷ Illust. Lond. Mag.

⁵⁸ Norfolk Chronicle.

⁵⁹ Dumfries Courier.

⁶⁰ Hull Packet.

⁶¹ Doncaster Gazette.

⁶² Gloucester Chron.

⁶³ Leicester Mercury.

⁶⁴ Dumfries Stand.

⁶⁵ Leeds Times.

⁶⁶ Notting. Journal.

⁶⁷ Newcastle Journal.

⁶⁸ Durham Chronicle.

⁶⁹ Midland Counties Herald.

⁷⁰ Guardian.

⁷¹ Daily Mail.

⁷² Bath Journal.

⁷³ Journal of Sacred Literature.

⁷⁴ Norfolk News.

⁵⁵ We are bound notwithstanding

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⁵⁷ We have the British Poet to confirm the

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⁶¹ This volume and does credit

⁶² The purchase too, for these

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⁸³ Local Press Magazine.

⁸⁴ Chester Chronicle.

⁸⁵ Sunderland ad.

⁸⁶ Peebleshirevertiser.

⁸⁷ Brighton Express.

⁷ Worcest. Chronicle.

⁸ Canad. News Letter.

⁹ Camb. Chronicle.

¹⁰ Aberdeen Journal.

¹¹ Clerical Journal.

¹² Bury Free Press.

¹³ Wesleyan Times.

¹⁴ Essex Herald.

¹⁵ Brechin Adver.

¹⁶ Scarborough Gaz.

¹⁷ Derby Reporter.

¹⁸ Bell's Messenger.

¹⁹ Bucks Chronicle.

²⁰ Greenock Adver.

²¹ Dumfries Herald.

²² The Leader.

²³ Woolmer's Gazette.

THE BRITISH POETS.

, and a glory of typography,"—"a marvel of cheapness,"—"perfect," &c. &c. The following extracts are

⁵⁵ We are bound to state that the publisher has kept faith with the public, and this notwithstanding the increased price of paper, &c.

⁵⁶ There is no doubt that it will supersede all others of the kind, as it evidently deserves to do.

⁵⁷ We have already taken occasion to bear testimony to the merits of the edition of the British Poets of which these volumes form a part, and every succeeding issue tends to confirm the highly favourable impression we had formed of it.

⁵⁸ The editor and the publisher have fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, their promise. The edition is decidedly the best and cheapest library edition ever yet issued from the British press.

⁵⁹ Mr Nichol has studied to retain the admiration of the public by the very efficient style in which the book is got up.

⁶⁰ The distinctive feature of this edition is elegance combined with cheapness.

⁶¹ This volume, with all Churchill's poems, is capitally got up, like its predecessors, and does credit to the press of Mr Nichol.

⁶² The purchaser of Nichol's Library Edition will thank the publisher, and the editor too, for these two beautiful and rich volumes of the great work.

⁶³ This volume merits, equally with its predecessors, in the same terms, substantial support.

⁶⁴ The series of the British classics, to which these volumes belong, continues to do the publisher credit.

⁶⁵ The subscribers to this elegant Library Edition of the Poets, have had no reason to complain of any breach of faith on the part of the publisher.

⁶⁶ Of all the volumes which have preceded it, we may say, almost without fear of contradiction, that the present is the cheapest.

⁶⁷ The recent additions to this singularly cheap and excellent series, only confirms our impressions of their value as a permanent contribution to our literature. The introductory dissertations form altogether the best *resumé* of the stores of English poetry.

⁶⁸ The book is got up in the same style, and with the same good taste as its predecessors.

⁶⁹ The remarkably cheap and handsome large-print edition of the English Poets continues to make satisfactory progress so far as the public is concerned.

⁷⁰ Of the whole series, so far as it has yet gone, it must be said that it conjoins superabundance and durability of appearance, with unexampled cheapness of price.

⁷¹ The critical acumen with which the powers of the above admirable writers are surveyed, is no mean feature in this beautiful edition of the Standard Poets.

⁷² The present is in every respect worthy of the series in which it appears. Greater praise is scarcely possible.

⁷³ It is gratifying to observe that this valuable edition of the British Poets continues to maintain the character with which it started.

⁷⁴ We must pay our tribute to the good faith which Mr Nichol keeps with his patrons, as displayed in the continued excellence of the publication, in all its features, literary, typographical, &c. &c.

⁷⁵ The volumes are well fitted to occupy a place in any library, so far as the publisher or the editor are concerned.

⁷⁶ We ought rather to congratulate the public on so spirited an undertaking having progressed so far that its success is assured—a result which appeared to us extremely doubtful at the commencement.

⁷⁷ Has all the recommendations of handsome type, capital paper, and excellent getting-up, combined with great moderation in price, and judicious and careful editing.

⁷⁸ It gives us pleasure to state that there is not the slightest deterioration in the getting-up.

⁷⁹ The volume, we need hardly remark, forms one of Nichol's "Library Edition of the British Poets," in many respects the most desirable series of works yet offered to the British public.

⁸⁰ We do trust that the publisher of this magnificent and amazingly cheap edition of the British Poets meets with that liberal measure of public patronage to which his generous and noble enterprise justly entitles him.

⁸¹ We repeat emphatically the recommendation which on frequent occasions we have given to the series.

⁸² Local Preachers' Magazine.

⁸³ Chester Chronicle.

⁸⁴ Sunderland Herald.

⁸⁵ Peeblesshire Advertiser.

⁸⁶ Brighton Examiner.

⁸⁷ Brighton Gazette.

⁸⁸ Brighton Herald.

⁸⁹ Christian News.

⁹⁰ Derby Mercury.

⁹¹ Express.

⁹² Essex and West

Suffolk Gazette.

⁹³ Exeter Gazette.

⁹⁴ Educational Rec.

⁹⁵ Essex Advertiser.

⁹⁶ Edinburgh News.

⁹⁷ Perthshire Courier.

⁹⁸ Reading Mercury.

⁹⁹ Stirling Observer.

¹⁰⁰ Suffolk Chronicle.

¹⁰¹ Salisbury Journal.

¹⁰² Sheffield Independent.

¹⁰³ Worcester Herald.

¹⁰⁴ Leeds Intelligencer.

¹⁰⁵ Bath & Cheltenham Gazette.

¹⁰⁶ Liverpool Courier.

¹⁰⁷ Homilist.

¹⁰⁸ Eclectic Review.

THE BRITISH POETS.

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⁹² Edinburgh News.

⁹³ Leeds Intelligencer.

⁹⁴ Peeblesshire Advertiser.

⁹⁵ Derby Mercury.

⁹⁶ Perthshire Courier.

⁹⁷ Bath & Cheltenham Gazette.

⁹⁸ Brighton Examiner.

⁹⁹ Express.

¹⁰⁰ Reading Mercury.

¹⁰¹ ham Gazette.

¹⁰² Mr Gilfillan's handsome library edition of the British Poets continues its course with admirable regularity and unflagging energy.

¹⁰³ In recommending this work to the favourable notice of the public, as one of the best editions of the kind ever published, we are not overestimating its value.

¹⁰⁴ Whether it be the ability with which it is edited, its moderate price, or the luxury of its bold type and beautiful printing, the series forms a kind of era in this age of rough and cheap reproduction.

¹⁰⁵ Mr Nichol, whose beautiful edition of the Poets has laid all men of taste under obligation to him, has just added two volumes to that incomparable series.

¹⁰⁶ The astonishing cheapness of these volumes, added to their other excellencies, cannot fail to make them generally acceptable, and we wish them every success.

¹⁰⁷ Atlas.

¹⁰⁸ Chelt. Examiner.

¹⁰⁹ Liverpool Mercury.

¹¹⁰ Hogg's Instructor.

¹¹¹ Charles Knight's Weekly Spectator.

[Specimen of Type].

THESE, as they change, ALMIGHTY FATHER, these
Are but the varied GOD! The rolling year
Is full of Thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring
Thy beauty walks, Thy tenderness and love.
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm;
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles;
And every sense, and every heart, is joy.
Then comes Thy glory in the Summer months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then Thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year;
And oft Thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks;
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves, in hollow-whispering gales,
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfined,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.
In Winter awful Thou! with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest roll'd,
Majestic darkness! on the whirlwind's wing
Riding sublime, Thou bidd'st the world adore,
And humblest Nature with Thy northern blast.

Mysterious round! what skill, what force divine,
Deep-felt, in these appear! a simple train,
Yet so delightful mix'd, with such kind art,
Such beauty and beneficence combined;
Shade, unperceived, so softening into shade;
And all so forming an harmonious whole;
That, as they still succeed, they ravish still.

¹¹² Local Preachers' Magazine.

¹¹³ Brighton Gazette.

¹¹⁴ Educational Rec.

¹¹⁵ Sheffield Independ.

¹¹⁶ Chester Chronicle.

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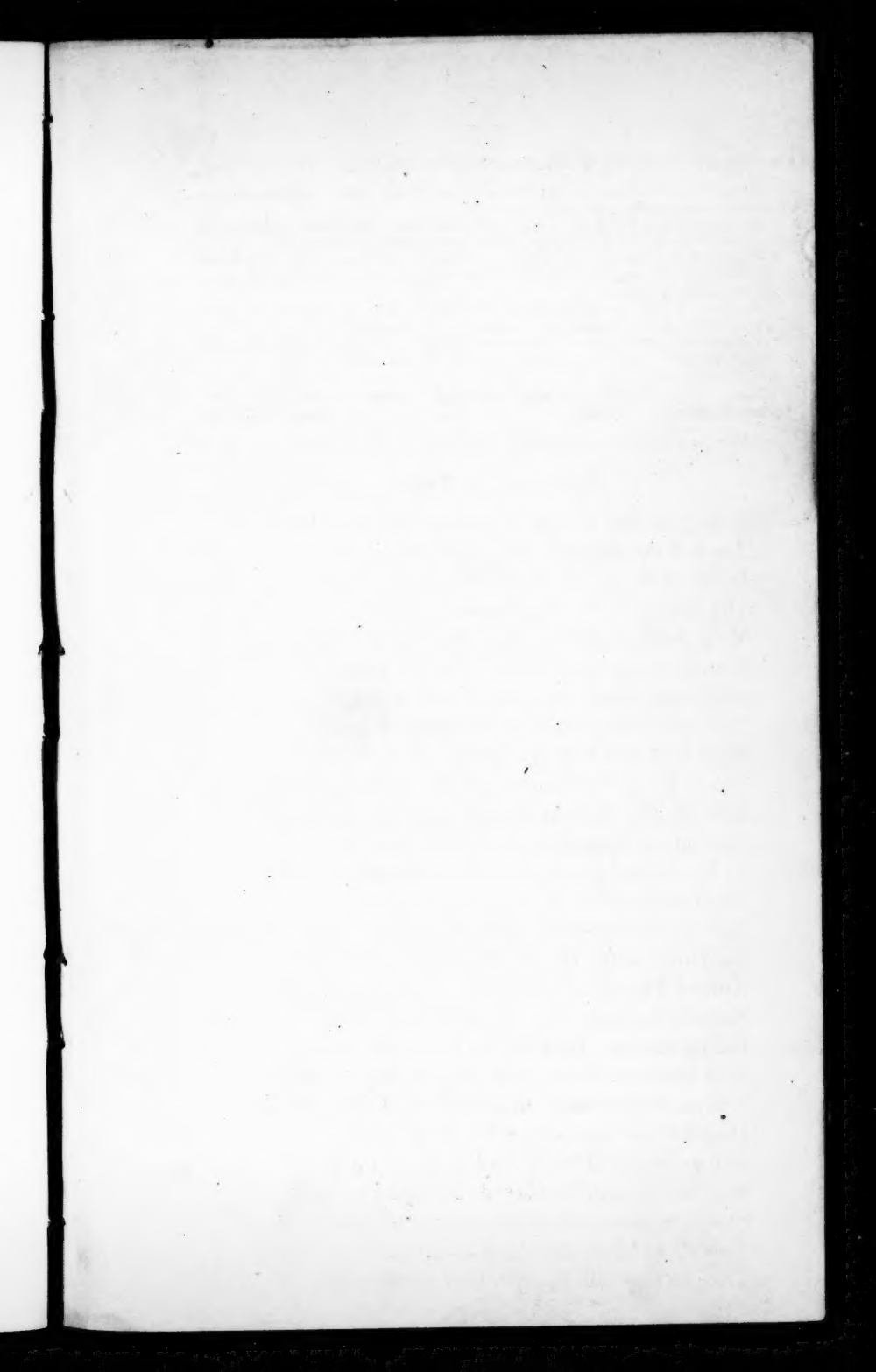
¹²⁷ Bath & Cheltenham Gazette.

¹²⁸ Brighton Examiner.

¹²⁹ Express.

¹³⁰ Reading Mercury.

¹³¹ ham Gazette.



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